DOCUMENT RESUME

ED 155 173 95 TM 006 290

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TITLE Experience-Based Career Education in Oakland, California: An Anthropological Perspective. External Evaluator's Final Report on the Experience-Based Career Education Programs, Volume III.
INSTITUTION Educational Testing Service, Berkeley, Calif.
SPONS AGENCY National Inst. of Education (DHEW), Washington, D.C.
PUB DATE Jan 76
CONTRACT NIE-C-74-0118
NOTE 103p.; For related documents, see TM 006 289-295, 525, and 927; Best copy available

EDRS PRICE MF-$0.83 HC-$6.01 Plus Postage.
DESCRIPTORS *Career Education; Case Studies; Educational Anthropology; Evaluation Methods; High School Students; Instructor Coordinators; Job Placement; Program Descriptions; *Program Evaluation; Research Methodology; *Resource Centers; Senior High Schools; Social Structure; Sociocultural Patterns; Student Attitudes; Student Characteristics; Student Placement; *Student Reaction; Student Teacher Relationship; *Work Experience Programs
IDENTIFIERS California (Oakland); *Ethnography; *Experience Based Career Education Program; Far West School CA

ABSTRACT

The Experience-Based Career Education (EBCE) program was designed to provide on-site vocational experiences for high school youth in order to promote: (1) career development skills and knowledge; (2) self-knowledge--interests, abilities, and values; (3) reading skills; (4) problem solving skills; (5) oral communication; (6) writing skills; (7) interpersonal skills; (8) basic quantitative skills; and (9) maturation skills. Aimed primarily toward program replicators, this evaluation of the EBCE program at the Far West School, Oakland, California, systematically describes the overt and covert structures of the program, and compares its actual operations with its theoretical design. An ethnographic approach was used to study the behavior of program participants: students, staff, and others. The initial research effort began with the construction of a model of the social structure, and continued with efforts to get to know the students. As intimacy with a group of students increased, the school's covert structure emerged. The final phase of the research included interviews with students and staff. Several issues of concern to EBCE replicators are highlighted: the student's attitude toward the program at the time of entry; the setting, the planned activities, and the staff; and the students' growth in career and personal maturity. Four case studies illustrate students' learning experiences. (Author/CTM)

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EXPERIENCE-BASED CAREER EDUCATION IN OAKLAND, CALIFORNIA: AN ANTHROPOLOGICAL PERSPECTIVE

BY

SHEL ANDERSON

AND

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EXTERNAL EVALUATOR'S FINAL REPORT ON THE EXPERIENCE-BASED CAREER EDUCATION PROGRAMS

VOLUME III

Submitted to the
National Institute of Education
of the
U.S. Department of Health, Education, and Welfare

Contract No. NIE-C-74-0118

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1947 Center Street
Berkeley, California 94704

January 1976

TM006 290

EXTERNAL EVALUATOR'S FINAL REPORTS ON THE EXPERIENCE-BASED CAREER EDUCATION PROGRAM

Volume I	Summary Evaluation of Four Experience-Based Career Education Schools
Volume II	Experience-Based Career Education in Charleston, West Virginia: An Anthropological Perspective
Volume III	Experience-Based Career Education in Oakland, California: An Anthropological Perspective
Volume IV	The Academy for Career Education: An Ethnographic Evaluation
Volume V	An Ethnographic Account of $(CE)^2$: Experience-Based Career Education in Tigard, Oregon
Volume VI	Student Outcomes and Participant Opinions in Experience-Based Career Education Schools
Volume VII	Search for and Development of Instruments Measuring Student Outcomes of Experience-Based Career Education Programs
Volume VIII	Behavioral Observations at Far West School: A Description of Experience-Based Career Education
Volume IX	Experience-Based Career Education: An Interorganizational Analysis

PREFACE AND ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

Ethnography is not yet a staple item in evaluation studies. For that reason we take the opportunity offered by a preface to indicate why an ethnographic investigation figures so prominently among the third-party studies of Experience-Based Career Education.

The term "ethnography" lies within the discipline of anthropology. At its simplest, an ethnography is a description of the way people "behave" in a particular culture or environment. The emphasis is on an holistic view. In the instance of the EBCE studies, the focus of investigation is on the participants (students, staff, and others) at four development sites. Particular reference is made in the EBCE ethnographies as to how the participants behave and, to some extent, why they behave in that way.

In the study of Experience-Based Career Education, this focus was invaluable. Many features of EBCE and the EBCE objectives were not amenable to measurement by instruments which existed before this study began or which could be constructed within the duration of the third-party study. On the other hand, an ethnographer, living and working as a participant-observer at the EBCE development sites, could provide a detailed description of what was actually happening in the operation of the four systems, indicate what was working well and where some problems still seemed to exist, and describe (through case study material) the rewards and satisfactions that came to those who participated in the program.

One of the questions that the ethnographers were directed to investigate in their studies was: What is the real program like in comparison to the paper version? By contrasting their own observations with written program planning documentation, the ethnographers were able to respond to this question. We believe that such observations and contrasts will be of particular value to those who may be interested in adopting or replicating any of the four EBCE systems. However, we caution readers against interpreting these discussions of discrepancies between intended and actual operations of program features as meaning that all discrepancies have negative consequences, or occur as a result of inadequate program administration. In experimental programs such as these, it is useful to have information about the evolution of program features, and each change and deviation from the

originally planned treatment should be examined on its own merits. Discrepancies can be positive, negative, or neutral.

If the project director's original expectations have been met, the description is provided in such a way that each reader becomes his own evaluator. The ethnographies are not evaluations or evaluative in the sense that is customarily meant. In describing what is going on, both the intended and unintended structures, processes, and outcomes, and in studying what it is that participants expect or feel ought to be happening, the ethnographer provides a glass through which potential adoptors and others can view -- even though darkly -- these educational systems. The description is intended to allow the reader to decide for himself how he would evaluate what he sees.

Readers will immediately perceive that the work of an ethnographer is highly subjective, and that there is a potentiality for bias. The ethnographers themselves have tried to protect against bias by utilizing a number of informants, selecting them to give varying points of view, and checking information and sources of information against each other. For example, the case study students reviewed and approved the case studies about themselves before the ethnographies were released. We have submitted drafts of the ethnographies to the developing agencies themselves for criticism and content verification, and have responded to their criticisms when content could not be verified through the field notes of the ethnographer.

In addition, we submitted early drafts to a panel of distinguished educational anthropologists for critiques, and corrected the drafts when conclusions rendered in the reports were not supported by sufficient documentation. The panel included Dr. Robert B. Textor, Professor of Education and Anthropology, Stanford University; Dr. Judith G. Goode, Associate Professor, Department of Anthropology, Temple University; and Dr. Harry F. Wolcott, Professor of Education and Anthropology, Center for Educational Policy and Management, University of Oregon. Dr. Textor also assisted us in the early planning for the use of ethnographic material in the total third-party investigation. We are grateful to these panel members for their technical assistance, and to the panel and the anthropologists who studied the four EBCE systems for helping us develop new insights into the evaluation of educational programs.

Reginald Corder
Project Director

January 1976

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CHAPTER 1

METHODOLOGY

A school, like any structured institution, creates a social environment to which its members must adapt. Students, staff, and even outside observers quickly learn that continued successful participation in the operations of the school requires of them a kind of social learning: the acquisition of values, attitudes, and modes of interpersonal behavior current within that social setting. This insight would be of greater concern to social scientists than to educators were not the social structure of the school inseparable from its function of education.

If the educational process is defined as the flow of information within the school setting, then any study of the total process must consider the entire universe of information that is being communicated. It can not be limited to the particular sub-set that deals with course content, subject matter, and "basic skills". The information that is transmitted to students also deals with patterned modes of social interaction within the school environment. When these are internalized they will place constraints upon the flow of information and thereby shape what the students will learn. The starting point of an anthropological study of an educational system is to determine the nature of these constraints, and the effects they have upon the learning process. One of the goals of such a study is to assess the ways in which the social structure of the school facilitates its educational goals, as well as the ways in which it acts to subvert them.

One aspect of the school's social structure is easily observable by anyone familiar with its formal organization. The traditional school population is divided into categories such as students, teachers, learning specialists, secretaries, administrative staff, and so on. These formal roles, together with the school's basic procedures and scheduled activities, comprise its theoretical structure--its ideal design. In practice, however, there are always modifications to this original design that must be introduced. Individual responsibilities are shared, exchanged, radically altered or completely eliminated. Basic procedures may be changed to suit operating conditions; intended activities may change in their scheduling, membership and function. The school's actual mode of operation contains an overt structure that may be observed and elicited from participating individuals and, subsequently, compared with the theoretical structure.

There is, in addition, a covert structure within the school. This consists of an informal set of rules concerning interpersonal behavior which conditions interaction, and thus constrains the flow of information. Social relationships which bear directly upon the educational process may not even occur within the ecological setting of the school building. This is particularly true of the Experience-Based Career Education program, where the focus of the educational process involves contact primarily outside the school environment.

This report assumes a prior familiarity by the reader with the theoretical structure of Experience-Based Career Education (EBCE), which may be found within many program documents. The intent of our observations and the purpose of our report has been to systematically describe the overt and covert structures of the EBCE program, and to compare its actual operations with its theoretical design. Because we have directed this report primarily towards program replicators, we have also focussed on the problems which are not merely idiosyncratic but are structural in nature, and likely to arise again.

Research Methodology

Generally, an anthropological study of social structure, whether in a traditional village, a modern urban area or an educational complex, involves an extended period of in-depth continuous participant observation. Only in this way is it possible to construct the individual social networks upon which an analysis of the entire structure can be based. It is unfortunate that time restrictions prohibited the full application of this research procedure in our study. Because the observers worked as a team to study two different EBCE programs (those being developed by the Appalachia Educational Laboratory and the Far West Laboratory for Educational Research and Development), it was possible to observe each site only at intervals during the course of a single academic year. Nor was the full year observed, since the anthropological study began in November, some time after the commencement of Fall semester. However, even with these limitations, it was possible for us to observe eight full weeks at each site.

Our initial research effort began with the construction of a model of the social structure at each site, which took the form of an interaction matrix (Figure 1).

SAMPLE INTERACTION MATRIX

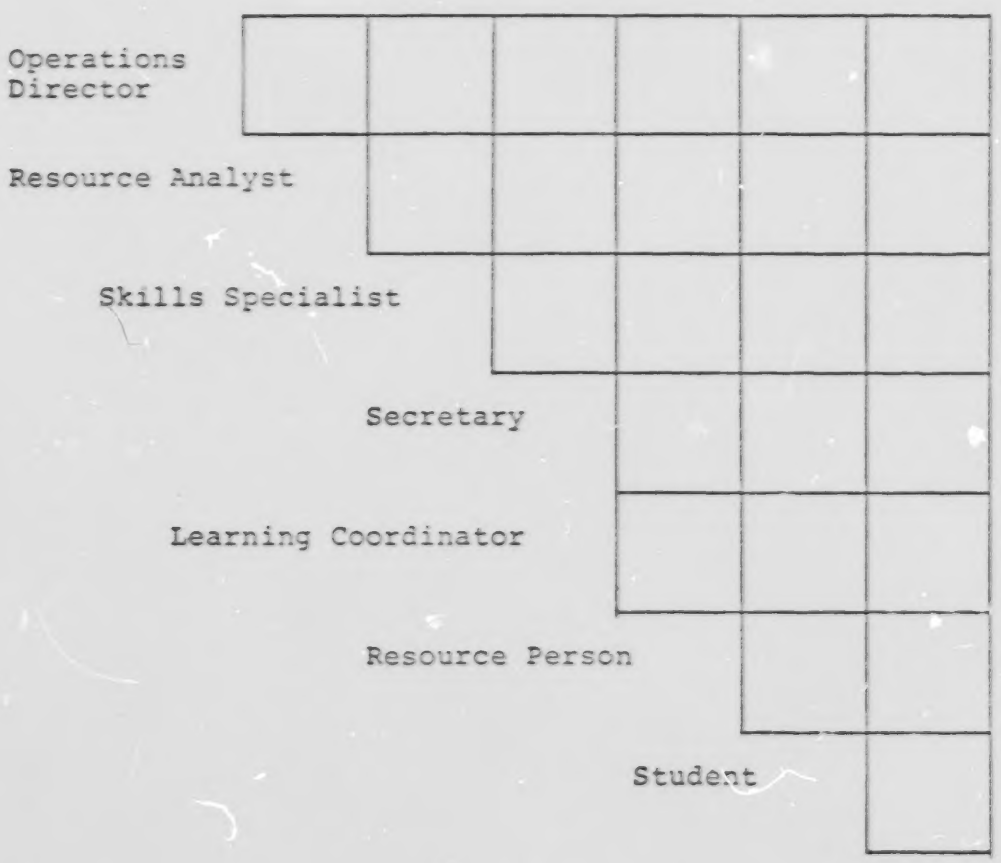

Figure 1.

Every "significant" category of personnel within the formal organizational hierarchy was arrayed against all other categories (and against itself if the category in question contained more than one individual). Not all personnel categories were considered "significant" in the context of this study--only those whose interactions with individuals in other categories had a direct bearing upon the educational process as it affected students. The major personnel categories which were excluded by this criterion (evaluators, developmental staff, and most levels of administration) will not always be present in replication sites. Our primary focus was those interactions which involved and included students, but we also considered interactions which represented nodal points in the flow of information that eventually reached students.

In this initial phase of our research we spent more time with staff than with students, realizing that a prolonged period of contact with the latter would be required before sufficient rapport was developed to obtain from them information of real value. The use of the interaction matrix as an initial research format quickly introduced us to the staff and to the major organizational stresses they faced. We were also, in this manner, made aware of the other categories of personnel whose interactions with students were significant, such as the chauffeur in one of the programs we studied, and the recorder at the other. Since our prior orientation to the EBCE program had been minimal, this procedure gave us a valuable over-view of the overt structure, and suggested the directions our later work would take.

Once we arrived at some understanding of the school's structure and operations, we spent a considerable amount of time simply getting to know the students. We hung around in student areas, attended group meetings and other structured activities, went out with students into the community, and treated them to long business lunches. Gaining their trust was not a simple matter. Because their program was experimental, EBCE students had been extensively observed, evaluated, and interrogated by many outsiders. They had become extremely wary, and their responses to the well-intended questions of outsiders had become highly patterned. To break through their reserve required an extended period of personal interaction.

The anthropological solution to the problem of observer effect upon social interaction is participant observation. The EBCE projects presented us, as social scientists, with a unique opportunity to work out internal roles within the structure. As professionals engaged in

our work we met fully the requirements to be Resource Persons (i.e., laboratory-approved volunteer teachers of a particular career area). By entering into the structure, we became more aware of its operations and its problems. We were especially interested in the function of the Resource Person (RP), which was the role that we adopted. In this way we experienced personally the Resource Persons' difficulty in maintaining adequate communications with the Operations Staff, and some of the problems they face in working with the students. As Resource Persons, we were also able to reciprocate for the information that students provided us, and thus minimize their feeling that we, like so many other evaluators, were "ripping them off" for time and information by not giving anything in return.

We also undertook at each site, to set up some form of Workshop or Seminar. At Far West EBCE, the Workshop is a standard format, and one could be easily arranged. The selection by students to enroll in the Workshop involved only the regular process employed by them in choosing a Workshop or RP; i.e., self-selection with Learning Coordinator* advice. Student interest in the Anthropology Workshop was quite high, and attendance ranged from 10 to 30 over a period of three weeks. Some students used it as part of their credit in Career Education; others elected to work on social science projects for which we, as Anthropologists, served as RP's, continuing this relationship after the Workshop ended.

At Appalachia Educational Laboratory another format had to be employed. Students there generally spend only one day per week at the Learning Center, and the rest of their time at "placements". Therefore, seven students elected to be placed with us, for periods of time ranging from one to three weeks. Those students received credit for a Career Orientation in Anthropology. In addition, each student completed one or more Activity Sheets (academic assignments), which earned them credit in Social Science and English/Communications.

In these structured interactions with students at both sites, we gave them a basic introduction to the discipline of anthropology and the work of an anthropologist, both as teacher and researcher. From our participation we learned a great deal about the documentation of student work. We served as evaluators for student projects and placements, observing the actual work they

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*For a description of the Learning Coordinator role, see page 12.

did and its translation into credit. This gave us some insight into the problems faced by many Learning Coordinators.

We learned more particularly about some students: their attitudes towards education and the EBCE program; their abilities to deal with conceptual and theoretical material; their aspirations and plans. The students with whom we worked most closely became invaluable sources for information of many kinds. We made numerous "site visits", going with these students to meet their RP's, and to observe their actual work in the community. From the groups of students we knew best we chose (with their consent) a number to be the subjects of intensive case studies and more structured interviews.

As we moved toward increasing intimacy with a group of students at each site, we were also accumulating information about a major segment of the school's covert structure--the small, informally organized and consistent peer associations. Space-time surveys taken over extended periods of observation revealed that most student interactions at the school occurred within the contexts of these groups. To some degree they also structured student interaction in the community. Further questioning elicited information about the nature of group formation. In this way we began to appreciate the effects of small group processes and interactions on the intended and scheduled program activities.

As we began each successive interval of work at the sites, the questions which directed our observations became more relevant and refined. By working as a team, we accumulated two sets of information about the program. Combining these sets in our ongoing discussions resulted in a deepening of analytic insight.

In the final phase of our research we returned once again to the interview format. In working on case studies of students we asked open-ended questions about their reasons for leaving regular schools, their reactions to various programmed activities, their work throughout the year, their future plans, and their conclusions about the effect of the program upon their personal growth. Since we were already familiar with these students and their work, we were able to pursue specific questions of interest at considerable length with some assurance of honest responses. Students were told how this information would be used, and that whatever portions were given in confidence would aid our analysis but would remain unattributed.

We also conducted final interviews with the staff. The Learning Coordinators of those students on whom case studies were done were requested to comment upon their work and attitude toward the program. We also asked the LC's what information and conclusions they would like to contribute to our report; this open-ended question produced some of the most interesting and valuable information we were able to collect.

CHAPTER 2

THE RESOURCE CENTER - PEOPLE AND PLACE

The Resource Center of Far West School, located on the penthouse floor of the El Dorado Office Building in downtown Oakland, bears little resemblance to the physical plant of a traditional high school. Its surroundings, too, are different--quite unlike the typically residential neighborhood within which most high schools are found. Far West School is situated in the heart of downtown Oakland. Within easy walking distance are many community resources, including the Oakland Museum, the Oakland Library, Laney Community College, Lake Merritt Park (which contains horticultural, zoological and recreational facilities of the Oakland Park System), the home of the Oakland Symphony, the Alameda County Administrative Center and Courthouse, and many retail stores, restaurants, banks, and office buildings. A major economic nexus within the San Francisco Bay Area, downtown Oakland is served by both surface and rapid transit facilities which link it to Berkeley, other parts of the East Bay, and to San Francisco via a 15-minute train ride. Although public transportation in the Bay Area has some limitations, Far West School is strategically located, so that students have easy commuting access to a great variety of regional community resources.

Downtown Oakland, like many business districts, has a marked circadian rhythm; it is virtually deserted at night, but crowded and active during day time business hours. Far West School participates in the busy phase of daytime city life. Its students join members of the work force as they travel to the Resource Center, move through the office buildings and go out to lunch. It is an adult world that they move in, with few others of their age group populating it. Far West students will rarely encounter friends from their home high schools in their new downtown locale, and reciprocally, return visits to their old schools are infrequent.

The Far West premises are converted from an office complex, though much of the original spatial layout remains intact. There are four major student rooms, where tables and chairs are scattered in a pattern that changes from day to day. Adjacent to or near each of these rooms are offices of the Operations Staff: the Director, the Learning Coordinator, the Resource Analyst, and the Staff Secretary. Down the corridor from this wing are the rooms used for tutorial sessions, and past them are the offices inhabited by several representatives

from the Far West Laboratory Development and Evaluation staffs. Though there are special points where students tend to cluster, they move freely over the entire floor. The map on page 45 of this report provides a general layout of the physical space of the Far West School.

Student Population

In recruiting students for the EBCE program, the intention of the Far West staff was to replicate the population of the Oakland School District community. The student population we observed during the 1974-75 academic year exhibited the following characteristics:

1) Grade Levels: The Far West School was designed to be a total high school experience, rather than just a Senior year program. Approximately 25% of the students were in their final year; another quarter were Juniors; roughly 50% were 10th Graders.

2) Male/Female Ratio: An estimated 65-70% of the Far West students were female. Several factors might account for this preponderance--including an under-representation of males in the Oakland Public School System and a self-selection process that led more females to apply to the Far West program.

3) Home Schools: Six Senior High Schools, 14 Junior High Schools and 2 Continuation High Schools fed into the Far West EBCE program. These are, for the most part, neighborhood schools which draw from a wide range of social and ethnic communities. At one extreme is the upper-middle class, white, suburban high school, and at the other is the inner-city, mainly black, ghetto school.

4) Racial and Ethnic Balance: The selection of students from all of the diverse feeder schools resulted in a range of ethnic diversity within the Far West environment that roughly replicates that which is found in the Oakland community. A large minority of the students--perhaps one-third--were from white, middle-class families. More than one-third of the students came from the Black Community, though they varied greatly in their class affiliations. Other minority groupings, notably Mexican- Asian- and Native-Americans were also represented.

Those students new to the program in the 1974-75 year were randomly selected by the EBCE staff from the applicant pool.

The "feeder" schools are all of a fairly traditional sort, but the previous educational experience of many Far West students included participation in a variety of experimental, or "alternative" school programs. A number of students had attended Church-run institutions, and others had spent time in the working world, when they dropped out for a period of one semester or even longer.

The students' motivations for applying to the Far West EBCE program showed a similar diversity, though there appeared to be some correspondence of student motivation with racial/class background. Black students, by and large, were attracted to the more pragmatic aspects of the EBCE program. Their main educational concern was for future job security, and Far West seemed the most advantageous of the available options. They had little reason to believe that traditional high schools with their academic emphasis would be of value when they entered the job market. The offerings of vocational schools were seen as too limited, and were stigmatized as the last resort of the stereotypical, "academically inept black student". Because Far West offered a great variety of opportunities for hands-on experience (and placed a secondary emphasis on "boring and irrelevant" academic work) it appealed to many Black students for whom practical concerns were given highest priority.

The upper-middle and middle class white students, while still ideologically committed to the notion of education, came to Far West in flight from the restrictions and authoritarian constraints of the high school environment. "Skyline [the elite suburban high school] was a prison; they locked you in every day." These students also objected to oppressive peer group pressures towards comformity in styles of dress, attitude, and modes of interpersonal behavior. Their complaints also focused on traditional high schools as inappropriate environments for learning. Many had lost patience with the classroom format and perceived their teachers as excessively concerned with professionalism, insufficiently committed on a personal level, and given to "petty games" in their dealings with students. Despite such vociferous complaints about the high school classroom, these same students were quite willing to plan to subject themselves to several years of college. As long as there was some power of choice, and they had control over the course material and instructors, they were willing to undergo the classroom experience. Most of them eagerly

anticipated the time when they could plan and execute their own courses of study, and work at their own individual rates. Far West's program was appealing because it offered them the chance to assume responsibility for the direction their education took.

There were, of course, students from all backgrounds whose only concern was to finish high school with a minimum of work. These individuals saw Far West as a way of marking time that involved them in few restrictions, and little, if any, academic hassle.

Relatively few students seemed attracted to the FWS-EBCE program in order to explore a career in which they were already interested. This may be a consequence of the program structure, which emphasizes individually-planned projects for course credit, rather than a strict placement routine.

The Staff

Learning Coordinators

The primary responsibility for assisting the student in creating an integrated, balanced program that both satisfies student needs and meets graduation requirements is the Learning Coordinator, hereinafter referred to as the LC. The population of LC's at Far West varied during the year; illness, resignation, and changes in staff positions caused frequent shifts. At various times eight persons occupied the four LC roles, with each LC responsible for from 22 to 29 students.

The five individuals who acted as LC's for the longest periods included one Black woman, one Black man, one White woman, and two White men. Like many professionals in the Bay Area, most of the LC's are native to and received some part of their training in other areas of the country. They were attracted to their present locations by the great variety of educational and professional opportunities available in San Francisco and the region that surrounds it.

Few of the LC's had a background in traditional teaching, though all had been involved in some form of educational innovation. Previous experience included clinical work in psychology, other alternative education programs, educational development, experimental film-making, and work in other media. Their advanced training tended to be in areas other than education, and none of

them foresaw future occupations for themselves in traditional schools, though only one or two intended to leave the education field entirely. Their interest in the EBCE program derived from its experimental, innovative nature; they were ideologically committed to the concept of "alternative" forms of education, and were quite critical of the traditional school environment, an attitude they shared with their students.

The LC's ranged in age from their late 20's to their early 30's, but in spite of the age difference between them and their students--or, perhaps because of it--they generally formed casual and comfortable working relationships.

Secretaries

It is a truism of organizational theory that any complex institution is run by its secretaries; they are the repositories and the managers of the logistical resources and the information most crucial to that institution's continued functioning. The EBCE program developed by Far West Laboratory is no exception to this rule.

The operations staff included two secretarial positions, both of which involved much more personal interaction with students than was included in the job descriptions. One secretary, nominally a receptionist/typist, had her desk located near the main entrance to Far West. This also placed it adjacent to the Ladies' Lounge, which was one of the major centers of student social life. Consequently, there were always students clustered around her desk, chatting with her or among themselves as she went about her work. When her desk was vacant, as during lunch hour, Far West students would take over her role as receptionist.

The Head Secretary was more centrally located, with a desk immediately outside the office of the Operations Director. Part of her job consisted of functioning in a secretarial capacity for the Director, and, to some extent for the LC's; the remainder of time was spent with students. She was in charge of handling student transportation monies, and so came into almost daily contact with virtually the entire Far West student population. The Head Secretary served as an information center for the movements and activities of both students and staff. In addition, she directed the "internal work experiences" of students who wished to practice their secretarial skills on a credit basis.

The Head Secretary's frequent interaction with students, combined with her personal skill in relating to them, made her an important friend and confidant to many. This was particularly evident in the case of Black female students. Being Black herself, the Head Secretary became a major role model for them, and exemplified a successful path through the adult world. Her advice was valued universally, and students, regardless of race, would speak to her about program-related problems they were hesitant to discuss with their LC's.

Resource Analyst

The Resource Analyst manages information dealing with resource persons and community resources. He actively recruits new resources to fill student requests for particular kinds of experiences, and also to expand the size and variety of the resource pool. The duties of this staff member also include writing "Resource Person Guides" to describe the range of site experiences available to students. On occasion the Resource Analyst may be called upon to deal with problems in Resource Person (RP)-student relationships; he may have to rectify misconceptions that the RP has about the EBCE program, or else he may emphasize the student's responsibility in making the interaction with an RP productive.

Since the Resource Analyst is the staff member in control of the most complete information about the resource pool, he is involved in advising students far more frequently than his job description indicates. This function is extremely important, since the LC's may not be well acquainted with the wide range of available resources. In his dealings with students, the Resource Analyst frequently provides suggestions for projects, and creates unique blends of Resources which may be utilized in carrying them out.

Previous to the 1974-75 academic year, site analysis was the responsibility of the Development staff, few of whom had extensive contact with students. Resources were thus developed sometimes by individuals who had little understanding of the students' actual procedures and preferences in working with RP's. This frequently led to discrepancies between the expectations of RP's and those of the students and the Operations staff. Because the work involved in site analysis and development became defined as an operations function, the Operations staff was expanded to include a specific Resource Analyst who would have closer contact with actual procedures and program members. The Analyst suggested that EBCE program

replicators could avoid problems such as these by involving the entire staff in setting up the resource pool.

The most serious problem identified by the Resource Analyst was the casual attitude taken by many students in their interactions with RP's. Students are responsible for setting up their own appointments with RP's. If they repeatedly show up late--or not at all--their behavior is likely to go undiscovered until the Resource Analyst receives an angry phone call. It is not required that students submit projects to their RP's for evaluation, and there are no sanctions--other than admonitions by staff members--that would keep students from acting irresponsibly when they have committed themselves to appointments, and prevent them from ending projects and disappearing without thanking their RP's or giving other gestures of closure. "Students have somewhat taken for granted the resources they use, and have not realized how many services have been rendered."

In sum, the duties of the Resource Analyst call for a wide range of abilities. He must be well enough acquainted with the EBCE program and its educational ideology to represent it in the community. He must understand the structure of the community in order to gain support from a wide variety of resources. He must deal with the public in informal interviews, formal presentations, and through written communications. Finally, he must maintain the level of Resource Person commitment to the program. In all of these activities, however, his primary concern must be with the students.

The Skills Specialist

Many of the academic activities of Far West students are devised, planned and monitored by the Skills Specialist. There are two major facets to this position, one concerned primarily with administration, and the other with teaching.

Her administrative responsibility at the beginning of the semester involves her in consultations with students and LC's, to help plan those portions of each student's academic program that will be handled through tutoring. Certain academic subjects such as algebra and foreign languages are taught in tutorials, as well as basic skills when the student feels a need to correct deficiencies. Once the special requirements of all students are known to her, the Skills Specialist must aggregate them into a tutoring and workshop schedule. She recruits a staff of tutors, schedules their sessions

with students, and then makes constant changes in both staff and schedules to match the ever-changing level of student demand. Reports from the tutors are channeled to her, so that she can monitor the progress of each student in every tutorial, and then report back to both students and LC's.

Almost three-quarters of her time in the 1974-75 year was, however, devoted to actual tutoring in three areas: a reading class that works on basic phonetic skills, a business math class that reviews basic numerical manipulations while developing such "life skills" as the management of checking and savings accounts; and a writing class that gives students supervised direction in improving spelling, grammar and other basic language skills. Both tutorials and these special classes rarely involve more than a handful of students.

The administrative aspect of the Skills Specialist's job is complicated and time-consuming, since it involves her in the program of virtually every student in the program, as well as the direction of the tutorial staff. The Skills Specialist at Far West felt more comfortable in the teaching aspect of her position, and was harried by the time demands of administration. These were especially intense at the beginning of each semester, when the first schedules must be set up, and each time progress reports were due.

The Tutors

The tutors' relationship to Far West was, of all the staff members, the most tangential. The rate of individual turnover was quite high, and their numbers varied considerably over the course of the year. This was only in part a function of student demand, since many tutors experienced time conflicts between their Far West tutorial schedules and their external commitments. Most of them were recruited from local colleges, whose work-study programs enabled Far West to obtain skilled help at relatively lower cost. These colleges operated on a quarter system, while the Far West academic year was divided into two semesters, and the mismatch of these two time cycles resulted in time conflicts and many other problems.

In general, the tutors were innovative and enthusiastic in their work, but disturbed by the apparent lack of Far West student motivation. This lack of motivation was reflected in frequent student absences from the tutorials,

thus disrupting the continuity of instruction and impeding the students' progress in mastering course materials. The overall response to tutorials may have been poor because students often took them not out of interest in the subject matter, but simply to fulfill high school requirements. Thus, many negative attitudes engendered in the traditional high school environment were transferred to the tutorial program.

Operations Director

Overseeing the general operations of the EBCE program is a Director, upon whose shoulders much of the institutional burden rests. He is in many cases the final decision-maker on matters of policy of design implementation. He is perhaps best described as a "crisis manager": whenever there is a major problem with students, resources or general procedures, the Operations Director is called in. One consequence of such crisis intervention and management by exception is that the director receives day-to-day information on the state of the program that deals more with deviation than with positive performance.

Balancing this perspective, however, is the frequent, informal contact that the Director maintains with the majority of Far West students. He interests himself in the projects that they devise, often helping them to assemble the needed resources, and he may be chosen by them to evaluate their final products. A few students who have serious communications problems with their LC's have found the Operations Director willing to take over some parts of that role.

His functions, in addition, include a sizable public relations task. He must deal with Oakland Public School Officials, with persons from NIE, with evaluators from Educational Testing Service, and with potential replicators who are interested in the possibility of instituting the EBCE program in their own school districts. The Operations Director also has some contact with resources; he handles problems and complaints (brought to his attention by either student or Resource Person), and he occasionally cooperates with the Resource Analyst in recruiting important new resources to the pool.

The main task of the Operations Director, in structural terms, is to act as a link between Development and Operations; in other words, to make this "cut-and-fit" program work. He assists the Operations staff in putting the program model into practice, and he provides the

Development Staff with the empirical information they need to alter the model to suit working conditions. The capacity to function on all these levels--to deal with students as readily as with professional educators, and to be equally conversant with theory and practice--is the major qualification for an Operations Director.

He is also the chief administrator for the Far West program, and as such must orient new staff members to their jobs, deal with structural breakdowns in communications among personnel, and oversee the numerous petty details that are involved in the functioning of a large institution. His field of vision must be, simultaneously, both broad and narrow.

Far West Laboratory Staff

Several members of the Laboratory's Development and Evaluation Staff occupy offices within the Far West School complex. Because students move freely over the entire floor, they, and the laboratory personnel are in frequent contact and readily accessible to one another. Students occasionally use them as Resource Persons (though interaction with individuals outside the program is preferable), and the Evaluations staff takes advantage of the presence of students to conduct periodic interviews and tests. The proximity of Laboratory Staff emphasizes to the students the experimental nature of the program and contributes to their critical awareness of the "cut-and-fit" alternative school they attend. Students feel that through their responses they are participating in the process of structural change.

The Laboratory personnel are sensitive to the often intrusive nature of their work, and so make an effort to establish some kind of reciprocity with students. When one of the LC's experienced an extended illness, two people from Development tried to help her students during the time she was away. Other Far West Laboratory staff members have conducted workshops on Communications, Creative Writing and Group Relations, which were generally well received.

Resource Persons

A final category of actor within the EBCE program is the Resource Person (RP). He or she is in many ways the key figure in the career education concept, and is central to the entire educational system that has been devised around it. There are well over 150 RP's involved with

Far West, more than in any other personnel category. It is not expected that all members of the RP pool are to be constantly utilized since to do so would vitiate or even destroy the willing participation of these volunteer resources.

Many students stated that the most valuable RP's they had were individuals in a small business or service organization who had the time to supervise their activities, and who came to understand the students' purposes in utilizing resources. However, students also came to have very successful experiences with many other kinds of RP's: people in large corporations, public figures such as local disc jockeys and elected officials, and teachers and researchers in local educational institutions.

Recruitment of RP's for the program has not been difficult. Many resources--particularly the large corporations and institutions--are motivated to participate in EBCE by their civic concern. They are told that EBCE is not only important to the students, it is also good for the entire Oakland community. Their connection with Far West may be seen as good public relations, providing a business with a considerable degree of public exposure in a favorable light, at a minimum cost. Too, RP's may have children in high school themselves, and are aware of the problems of increasing student disinterest and alienation from the experiences of their children. By opening their places of business to EBCE they are "doing their share" in finding solutions to these problems.

The educational philosophy underlying the EBCE concept was also a major incentive for RP's to participate. There was a general feeling among the RP's we spoke with that students should get out of the classrooms and have some experience in the real world. The small businessman, in particular, who is likely to be self-made, stresses the limited value of his own high school "book learning" in helping him to attain his present position. (From the opposite perspective, though, many RP's were concerned that the academic side of the EBCE program will leave the students inadequately prepared for college.)

The Resource Analyst stressed the ease with which Resource Persons are recruited: "When the program is properly explained, it's much easier to gain cooperation than some people think. Most community persons are willing and even eager to help...It's somewhat ego building for RP's to explain their work to students."

More important than simply having a large number of resources is assembling a pool appropriate to the students' needs and interests. Students have assisted in this process by recruiting resources for their own special projects. These resources later become available to the rest of the student body. The kinds of choices that students make in recruiting new resources also gives direction to the Resource Analyst in his own task of expanding the available pool.

The structure of the pool of resource persons available to students had a definite white-collar bias, and opportunities for students to learn about craft or service professions were limited. Apparently, previous attempts to incorporate these kinds of resources had been discouraging because the students' interest in hands-on experience was frustrated. As the Resource Analyst observed, "Craftsmen who charge on an hourly basis can't teach students on their client's time." Also, labor union restrictions, insurance, and safety rules may combine to make such sites inaccessible to students.

The white-collar bias of the Far West resource pool, and its overrepresentation of careers in the professional/creative fields, was not a part of the program design. A major intent in assembling the pool was to give the students exciting and innovative environments in which to pursue projects related to their own interests. To Far West students the professional/creative career areas seemed to provide such environments. In the Far West program, the students did learn much about the process of gaining access to white collar resources, but somewhat less about the total spectrum of occupational availability in the Oakland community.

Site Monitoring

Visits to and monitoring of resource sites by staff are essential parts of the EBCE program. The monitoring of sites ensures that students will have productive experiences with resource persons, and will not be continually occupied with "make work" tasks. The Far West design makes such site visits the responsibility of the LC. In fact, overseeing the programs of 26 or 27 students left these staff members with little time to do an effective job of site visiting during the period of our observations. In replications of the FWL/EBCE model, LC's will need to plan and budget their time carefully to have blocks of time available for site visits.

CHAPTER 3

PROGRAM STRUCTURE AND SOCIAL PROCESS

Although the Experience-Based Career Education concept emphasizes the utilization of community resources, the formal and informal group processes that occur within the Resource Center in many ways determine the quality and shape of the students' external experiences. The formal processes are scheduled, structured, and intended activities that have been designed to implement the Far West EBCE model. The informal processes, on the other hand, while they are also scheduled and structured, are "unintended" in that they are not included in any descriptions of the program's operation. These two sets of processes, while conceptually distinct, interact to generate the actual, ongoing activity patterns that may be observed at Far West.

Advisory Group Meetings

Each LC should assemble all of his or her students for at least three hours a week in an interaction context called an Advisory Group Meeting. These are always scheduled at 9:00 A.M. so as not to conflict with other student activities, such as tutorials or appointments with RP's. The meetings are held in four locations, which are indicated on the Far West floor plan to be found on page 45 of this Chapter. Attendance is mandatory, and so there should be from 24 to 29 students at each meeting, depending upon the size of the LC's student load. (Sometimes the LC splits his group in two, to better allow for participation by all students.) The intended function of the Advisory Group Meeting is to provide an information nexus, with the flow being both vertical (from Operations Staff to students) and lateral (from one student to another).

At the Advisory Group Meeting, the LC conveys to the students announcements from the Development, Operations or Evaluation staffs. These may be descriptions of newly developed community resources, procedural changes, scheduling information and deadlines, impending tests, imminent visits by external observers, and admonitions from various sources concerning inappropriate or improper student behavior. A standard activity is filling out the numerous forms and documents which provide the Far West

staff with information about student projects. The most commonly filled out form is the Student Activity Report, which details the student's program for the week to come.

The Advisory Group Meeting should also be a forum for the exchange of information among students concerning their projects and RP's. The meeting is thought of as "open-ended" in that it may become an informal counseling session, or a discussion of topics interesting to the students. Complaints about the program may also be voiced by the students in this context. Some LC's use their Workbooks on Decision-Making and Problem-Solving as group activities during these sessions. They may also be used to provide the students with sources of external information, such as films or guest lecturers.

This, at least, was what the designers of the Far West program thought the Advisory Group Meeting should be. And, for the first semester, while students were still accustoming themselves to the program, Advisory Group Meetings in fact tended to take this form. Indeed, the groups were so lively that some LC's experienced considerable difficulties in controlling and directing them. Second semester, however, saw a major change. Attendance took a marked decline; students would come late and leave early; and the general level of interest was extremely low. Meetings had become a predictable routine of forms, harangues and bored recitations by students of their activities, with no expectation of anything new happening. By this time of year, students had formed their own interaction groups, which tended not to coincide with their Advisory Groups, and, as a result, the meetings were not considered to be events of any social significance.

Many students were quite vocal in their criticisms of the Advisory Group Meetings, sometimes exclaiming in the middle of a particularly tiresome session, "Do we have to do this?" One student assured us that "Advisory Groups could stand a lot of improvement. I'm serious." The LC's were not unaware of this problem, but by the time steps were taken to improve the sessions, the situation had become irreversible. One LC planned, with her students, to have movies, field trips and outside speakers, but student enthusiasm was already so low that these attempts never went beyond the planning stage. The few students who wished to take Advisory Group Meetings seriously found it difficult to counter the silent apathy and ridicule of the others.

By the end of the school year, this structure had become "empty"--a form without content--because it failed to provide novel experiences. The functions which it continued to perform were those which were useful to the administration of the program, and not those which were to the students' educational benefit. With few exceptions, the Advisory Group Meetings failed to spark the sense of unity which would make sharing of information and concerns among students non-trivial. In fact, the major shared sentiment among students who attended the meetings was boredom and hostility toward the requirement.

Package Meetings

A similar pattern emerged with respect to another of the programmed activities--the Package Meetings. The Far West Laboratory staff has developed five "packages", or guides to devising projects within specific interest areas such as Social Sciences, Natural Sciences, Biology, Commerce, and Communications & Media. For each interest area there is a Learning Package Booklet that defines the interest area and its subfields, suggests potential resources, and presents sample project sketches and plans. Students doing projects in these areas may seek additional information and guidance at a Package Discussion Group, which meets at least once every month. We quote from the Social Sciences Learning Package Booklet:

> "Depending on its size and the variety of interest among the student members, the group can divide itself into smaller subgroups to meet more frequently. The purpose of package meetings is to provide students with a common forum for:
>
> 1. Discussing the broad issues, concepts, relationships and theories of the package career/discipline area;
>
> 2. exchanging and discussing ideas about projects and field experiences;
>
> 3. stimulating discussions of the package goals through a student exchange of community experiences;
>
> 4. furnishing students with occasional background materials and information, showing films, hosting outside speakers on topics related to the package

discipline/career area and students' specific projects;

5. giving interim and final progress reports and presenting project products;

6. discussing, planning and critiquing project sketches and project plans;

7. clarifying personal values, problems or concerns, related to careers or issues students are studying through the package; and

8. brainstorming on topics or to solve problems."

It is clear that a Package Meeting of the sort described above would require a high level of student interest and participation. In our observations of Package Meetings, neither student interest nor student participation were at all evident. At most, one or two students would give cursory descriptions of their projects, stimulating no further discussion. Other students might request information on RP's suitable for projects they were planning, without much further elaboration. Toward the end of the year, Package Meetings were discontinued altogether. When we asked a student his opinion of Package Meetings, he answered by saying, "What Package Meetings?"

It is possible that the Package Meetings became another "empty" structure because students expected them to be teaching sessions where a specific body of information was presented to them in structured format. In traditional schools, students take courses which consist of well-defined sets of facts, and the transition to a conceptually-oriented approach is difficult for them to make. Furthermore, the level of discussions that should, in theory, occur during the Package Meetings requires that students already have fairly specific projects underway, whereas most students come to the Package Meetings for assistance in generating project ideas. Their only contribution to discussions can be of a vague and preliminary sort. Those students who have already conceived their ideas find it more useful to discuss them with their LC's or with the Resource Analyst.

Students were in general reluctant to enter into discussions with other students in such formal contexts as the Package Meetings. When they did seek out information from their peers, it was more likely to be on a

personal, individual basis. For most students, the primary source of information was their informal interaction group, the membership of which did not always coincide with either the Package group or their Advisory groups.

A feeling expressed by most students is that "packaged information", which is abstracted from their own experiences, is irrelevant and of little utility. An example of packaged information is the sample project contained within the Social Science Learning Package Booklet (Figure 2). A comparison of this sample with the project plan of an exemplary Far West student (Figure 3), who had mastered the project format, reveals that the sample is written at a level of sophistication and complexity which renders it useless as a real model to almost any student.

Tutorials

A large part of the academic program at Far West occurs in the tutorial format. Math and Foreign Language requirements are met almost exclusively by means of Tutorials. English Grammar and Writing Skills Tutorials comprise another major category, although many students fulfill English requirements by writing essays about their projects.

Students are programmed into Tutorials at the beginning of the first semester, when they take diagnostic tests to determine their competency in basic math and language skills. An eighth grade level of performance on these tests is a California State minimum requirement for graduation; scores below this level mean that the student must either take the test again at some later date, or take at least a one-semester course in basic skills. Although LC's may strongly advise students to request Tutorials in basic skills or other academic areas, the final decision rests with the students, who can not be forced into Tutorials against their will.

A major problem with Tutorials (as mentioned in Chapter 2) is the complexity of their scheduling. The Skills Specialist must determine the tutorial needs of all the students at Far West, engage a staff of tutors for them, and set up a schedule of sessions which does not conflict with the other activities of students and tutors. In practice, this caused a long delay in commencing Tutorials at the beginning of the semester.

far west school —— STUDENT PROJECT PLAN

Page 1 of 4

STUDENT _____ PROJECT NO. ? PACKAGE _____

LC APPROVAL _____ DATE _____ DATE PROJ. STARTED _____

TECHNICAL ADVISOR(S) *(If any)* _____

1. PROJECT DESCRIPTION

A. *Title* Impact of Revenue Sharing on Local Government

PLANNED CREDITS		*FWS Credits*	*OPS Units*
OPS Subject Area(s)	1. American Government	5	0.5
	2.		
	3.		

B. *Theme (Please give a brief description of your project)*

I will investigate the impacts of revenue sharing on the services provided individuals and municipalities, the power of elective or appointive officials over the flow of revenue sharing funds, and attempt to determine whether the coming of revenue sharing is affecting the composition of elective bodies in Alameda County.

C. *Questions to be Investigated:*

1. What is meant by "revenue sharing?"
2. Are some types of communities profiting from it more than others?
3. Has Oakland's share of the revenues of federal spending gone up or down under the plan?
4. Is revenue sharing a political gimmick?
5. How can the law on revenue sharing be challenged or changed?
6. Are revenue sharing funds being responsibly administered?
7. What can I, as an individual, do to insure equitable distribution of funds?
8. How does revenue sharing affect the services available to an individual and the taxes he must pay?
9. How does revenue sharing affect local politics and election results?

FOR LEARNING COORDINATOR USE ONLY

Mid Term Review	*Initials*	*Date*	*End of Semester Review*	*Initials*	*Date*

Figure 2. Sample Project from Learning Package Booklet.

Figure 2. (continued)

far west school | PROJECT GOALS, INDICATORS, AND EVALUATION (See INSTRUCTIONS on Reverse Side) | Page 3 of 4

Student _____ LC _____ Project Title Impact of Revenue Sharing on Local Government Date due _____ Date comp.

Goals and Indicators	For Indicators: Due Date	For Indicators: Evaluator	For Evaluator's Use: Date	For Evaluator's Use: Initials & Rating	For Evaluator's Use: Comments
1. To find out if revenue sharing has had a positive effect on the ability of the governments of Oakland and Alameda County to provide necessary services to their citizens.					
a. Complete an essay on the view of people in local politics regarding revenue sharing.	4/20	RP			
b. Develop a chart showing per capita expenses before and after revenue sharing.	4/10	Package Coordinator			
2. Understand the types of stresses and political changes that can occur at a local government level when something such as revenue sharing is imposed from above.					
a. Outline the identifiable political changes which may be attributed to revenue sharing.	4/20	Package Coordinator			
b. Describe the developing attitudes of community groups and fund recipients under revenue sharing and determine if any broad trend of acceptance or rejection is underway.	4/20	RP			
3. Know what types of political action can be initiated or successfully completed to challenge or change revenue sharing.					
a. Prepare a taped lecture on the types of alternatives available to me as an individual, including legal and social pressures I might bring to bear to make the government respond to complaints about revenue sharing.	4/30	RP			

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2nd revised

far west school — STUDENT PROJECT PLAN

STUDENT _____ PROJECT NO. _____ PACKAGE Social Science

LC APPROVAL _____ DATE 1/28/75 DATE PROJ. STARTED 10-3-74

TECHNICAL ADVISOR(S) *(If any)* _____

I. PROJECT DESCRIPTION

A. *Title* County Government

PLANNED CREDITS		FWS Credits	OPS Units
OPS Subject Area(s)	1. American Government	5	.5
Political Science or Urban Studies	2. ~~Related Social Science~~	5	.5

B. *Theme (Please give a brief description of your project)* To learn about the main fucntions of tha Alameda County Board of Supervisors, as well as to get a understanding of a Supervisors job outside of the board meetings.

C. *Questions to be Investigated:*

What fucntions does the board do to benifit the community?

Does the information used by a Supervisors office for the funding of a project quite often contain some sort of information other than the info directly related to the project that would be benificial toward the the funding of that project?

What is tje propagamda content of information used by a supervisors office? Is this info at to,es used politically in one way or another?

FOR LEARNING COORDINATOR USE ONLY

Mid Term Review	Initials	Date	End of Semester Review	Initials	Date
		1/5/77			4/28/75

Figure 3. Actual Student Project Plan.

Figure 3. (continued)

far west school	PROJECT GOALS, INDICATORS, AND EVALUATION *(See INSTRUCTIONS on Reverse Side)*	Page 3 of

Student _____ LC _____ Project Title County Government Date due 1-28-74 Date comp. ~~_____~~

Goals and Indicators	For Indicators: Due Date	For Indicators: Evaluator's	For Evaluator's Use: Date	For Evaluator's Use: Initials & Rating	For Evaluator's Use: Comments
				L.L.	The project is an excellent presentation of the issues + problems in which you were involved. My only reservation is that you didn't say enough about how govern. is involved in the problem. What role does city + county govern. play? This should have been done to satisfy the Am. Govern. credit.
1) Get involved in some of the projects currently going on in a supervisors office by: talking with the RP to find one or more projects that interest me.	1-28-75	LC		1	
a) Completed, working on two projects	"	RP			
2) Understand what is presently happening in the Rockridge district in Oakland.	"			K 3	IS WORKING ON AN ESSAY ON MORE RECENT ROADS IN ROCKRIDGE
a) Write an essay of the history of the area,				K 4 (	
b) take photographs of the area and do a photo/essay of the area ~~comparing present photos with old photos from library.~~	"			K 4 (	VERY NICE WORK!
c) organize newspaper clippings, etc. (City Concial meetings)	"			K 4 (	(NOTE - Low ratings of 3 and 4 were given by the RP because these indicators were not completed by the end of semester. Project continued into 2nd semester.)
XD 3) Become involved in the Glen Echo creek issue;	"			K 4 (	
a) attend meetings on project, go on prelimenary survey, write report on whats happening, photo essay		etc.		(next	semester) photo essay enclosed

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Extensive alterations in tutorial schedules must be made throughout the year, as student requests and outside commitments change.

It was observed that students requested a greater number of Tutorials during the second semester than the first. One of the possible reasons for this increase may have been the difficulty experienced by students in devising and completing new projects, which led them to seek credit through the more structured format of the Tutorial. This was interpreted by the staff as a partial failure of the program, since it kept students within the Resource Center instead of moving them out into the community.

There appeared to be a definite pattern to the changing levels of student attendance at Tutorials during the course of the semester. Although some students were conscientious participants throughout, many would lose interest after a few weeks, and fail to appear at most, or all, of their scheduled sessions. A majority of the progress reports submitted by tutors at the middle of the second semester contained comments such as: "Nothing much is done since there is no steady effort made to come to class"; "Student has attended class so infrequently that I have not been able to determine student's specific needs"; and "Student participated in vocabulary test for which she was not prepared due to poor attendance".

Poor attendance at Tutorials at mid-semester leaves students with two possible alternatives near its close. They may elect to work at a mad frenzy and complete a minimum of required work, or they may simply drop the Tutorial and lose their potential credit. As one student told us, "you miss one day, and then you miss the next day, and then you're so far behind that you just don't go back."

Absenteeism at Tutorials results from various student attitudes. Many were bored with the classroom format, and found it difficult to respond even to a situation of small groups and personal supervision by the tutor. Others had personal conflicts with particular tutors, and refused to attend sessions which they conducted. A few felt that the tutorial staff, drawn from undergraduate college students, were not competent teachers. Edward remarked, "I'm being taught by undergrads from Cal, and I wonder how much more I could be learning." Books were frequently unavailable or in short supply, leading to many student complaints.

The major problem, however, was that students became involved in the informal social activities of their personal networks, and began to avoid school responsibilities altogether. As Chato observed, "When you have freedom, there are two doors you can go through. You can do your own thing, or you can decide to do nothing."

Workshops

Perhaps the most successful program structure was the workshop format. Two types of workshops were offered during the school year. In one type, students participated in organized activities, and received credit directly. In other workshops, partial credit was offered for participation, but the student was required to develop a project in conjunction with the group activities and discussions. Development staff led two workshops, one in Creative Writing and the other in Group Interaction Skills. A Photography workshop was held at Far West Laboratory, where students received training in basic photographic techniques and had access to darkroom facilities. One LC organized and led a Psychology workshop; a workshop in Parapsychology grew out of a student's recruitment of new RP's. When the anthropological team decided to become involved in an actual role within the Far West program structure, the workshop format was found for them to be the most flexible, the most popular, and therefore the most suitable.

The workshop format was extremely popular among students because it provided them with a structured and regular way of obtaining credit that was not overly confining. The proper balance between structure and flexibility to which the students responded most positively was difficult to obtain, but of all the intended activities at Far West, the workshop format was the most frequently successful. Participation in workshops was optional, and many of them were organized in direct response to student requests. Whereas students were quite vociferous in their complaints about other parts of the Far West program, workshops were rarely criticized, save when they were undersupplied with resources.

The Package Meetings and the Advisory Group Meetings were unpopular because they ultimately failed to provide students with novel experiences, but the workshops never lost this capacity. Throughout the year, outside speakers were brought in, films were shown, and the workshop leaders continued to pour into them a great deal of creative energy. (It is noted that, as conceptualized

by program developers, Package Meetings had the same potential for use of films, outside speakers, etc.) It is significant that when the students themselves tried to establish a new, alive and responsive group structure, it was the workshop format that was chosen as a model. They created a Social Science Workshop (stimulated by the Anthropology workshop), to replace the Package Meetings as a forum for the discussion and innovation of student projects. (The student-developed Social Science Workshop will be described in detail in Chapter 4.)

External Courses

Another path to credit open to students at Far West involved participation in External Courses, which were given by other institutions in the community. This represented an extremely rich source of possibilities because of the large and diverse number of resources within easy access of the school. Students took courses at the University of California in Berkeley, at the two Community Colleges in Oakland, at Adult Schools, and with the Oakland Parks and Recreation Department. Students also had the option of taking courses for credit at regular high schools, but to no one's great surprise, not a single student elected to do so. Another possibility open to students was private lessons, usually in music, arts or crafts.

Students particularly enjoyed the opportunity to move into the college environment. Even when they committed themselves to courses that were beyond them, their attendance was usually quite regular. As in the case of workshops, external courses could either be taken directly for credit, or else could form part of a larger project which would earn them a substantial number of units. One group of students, for example, audited a college course on Domestic Law, and combined this with visits to local courts in a joint project on Marriage and the Family. College-bound students commented that the opportunity to take college-level courses while still in high school (without the heavy pressures of competition for grades) was probably the best kind of preparation available to them.

Projects

The intended group activities we have been describing were designed by the Far West Laboratory staff to aid

students in developing and implementing the projects which should be the foci of their individual programs. The Student Guidance Handbook prepared by the Far West Laboratory states that the project is intended "to demonstrate planning which:

a. is organized around an interest in a career, subject, problem or issue;

b. includes significant researchable questions which will guide the student's inquiry;

c. includes learning in at least two life skills areas, two career development areas, and two basic skills activities;

d. includes indicators that will show completion of project goals and package goals (if applicable);

e. is worth at least two EBCE credits;

f. includes at least one tangible product;

g. includes at least one exploration with a resource person or resource organization; and

h. shows written waiver on the plan for deviation from the above."

Ideally, students select and design projects by their own academic or career interests, which lead them to search out suitable RP's, and then to develop products which can be applied to one or more graduation requirements. For example, one student with an interest in Astrology used a professional astrologer as an RP and completed a project that earned him credit in both Math and Science. Another student, who hoped to become a veterinarian, found an RP at an animal hospital, and worked there for some time while earning credit in Biology. For this project she also conducted independent experiments at a nearby laboratory on the most effective medicine to counter mite infestation of rabbit ears.

This is the project path followed by most students for their miniprojects, when they are working most closely with their LC's. Later projects, however, tend to be arrived at via alternative routes. Typically, in the course of their miniprojects or Career Orientations, students locate RP's and sites which they enjoy. Rather

than branching out into new areas (which would require the location of new resources) they remain at the site that first appealed to them, often without any plans for projects to be completed. A case in point is Helena, who did her miniproject at a "Soul" radio station, where her RP was a well-known disc jockey. She found the staff and the work there so congenial that she continued at this site throughout the entire year. However, it was only at the end of second semester that she devised a project plan to document her activities at the radio station, and this was perfunctorily done. Our own experience in acting as RP's for students doing an Anthropology project on "The Social Structure of Far West" reflects this same process. The students had become interested in working with us, and received guidance from us in methodology and theory. However, it was not until their products were in the final stages of write-up that their project plans were completed and submitted.

In a variation on this path, students use persons and resources previously known to them as part of their projects. For example, Mary had worked at a children's day care center the summer prior to her admission to Far West. When she discovered that the day-care center was a Resource Organization (RO) she returned, essentially. to her old job. A site visit by us revealed that the staff member with whom Mary worked most closely thought that her sole purpose in returning to the center was to gain experience in, and some understanding of, the jobs performed by various center employees. The RP had no conception of the kind of purely academic credit Mary would be receiving for her work on this site, but neither, for that matter, did Mary. A second example of this path is provided by Aphrodite, a Far West student of Greek extraction, who had been involved with a Greek Folk Dance Troupe for several years before entering the program. Her major source of credit throughout her two years at Far West was her continued participation in the troupe; in just one semester she used this activity to earn units in Physical Education, Costume Design, Drama and Performing Arts. During that same semester she also received credit for an External Course in Belly-Dancing.

A final instance is the project of another student who devised a project around her work as a Teacher's Aide at the Elementary school she had attended, which was only two blocks from her home. It was not uncommon for students to recruit parents or family friends to be their RP's, and then to devise some kind of project around this association.

Affecting all of these paths is the credit structure of the individual student's program. Obviously, great creative intelligence is shown in translating preferred activities into some kind of academic credit that satisfies graduation requirements. In the case of certain credit needs, such as Science, History or World Studies, students are forced to seek out sites or RP's where these specific topics may be explored. For instance, Edward, with a science requirement to fulfill, went to a biological laboratory which offered a structured introduction to each of its various departments. His initial interest in Biology was quite minimal, and he found it difficult to develop a project that related to it. A number of students who needed credit in math, but were unwilling to take Tutorials, signed up for a lengthy Career Exploration at a large bank, which also offered a structured experience. Another site frequently used by students was the Lake Merritt Park Wildlife Refuge, located only a few minutes walk from Far West. A selection of this site was known to be good for some kind of credit in Biology or Natural Sciences.

It is clear from these examples that the project path followed by many Far West students is somewhat different from that intended by the program developers--though it is known to and accepted by the Operations staff. The structure originally devised to teach students skills in long-term planning is generally not employed in the fashion intended. Some of the students master the notion of the project plan as a set of documents more relevant to the administrative concerns of the program than to their own planning. They understand the necessity of reporting their activities in this structured way, and they also see that such minimal compliance with the program frees them to go about their work unhampered. Moreover, in the process of mastering the documentation, these same students begin to conceptualize their projects in terms of goals (what they wish to learn) and indicators (how they can demonstrate what they have learned).

Most students do not use the project plan as any kind of directive in their work, even when they have completed it in advance. They feel free to change their project ideas in response to the actual conditions they find at sites, the time available for the project, the relationship they develop with the RP, and the way their interests change as they progress. These are the students who complete their final project plans in the last, harried days of the semester, after their products are finished or well underway. This is a realistic reaction to the complexities of working out a project. Even a student who tried to follow an original plan as an organization for his work found that "it's also hindering my

work." However, the post facto creation of a project plan is of value to students in helping them evaluate their work and in forming their final products. The design of the FWL instructional model does not require that students develop project plans and follow them rigidly as in a contract system even when their interests change. Project plans may evolve and change, and the design requires that the LC provide for and oversee replanning if student interests or other circumstances suggest. Final commitment to the plan may, in fact, take place only a few weeks before the final product is due. Thus, any of the student approaches to the use of the Project Plan described above is acceptable within the FWL/EBCE design.

For a few students, the project plan is simply one more of a series of incomprehensible forms and documents which they must submit, but which bear no relationship to their actual activities. The credit they need is the chief structure for building the plan. One-half unit requires the documentation of 75 hours of work with RP's and RO's, in reading and product preparation; actually completing the project plan is simply the creative allocation of hours among these categories.* The project goals and indicators are then filled in with the help of LC's or other students.

These variations in student procedures for devising and implementing projects may be summarized in a three-by-three matrix that arrays the student's mode of choosing resources against the operating strategy that is used in writing project plans:

		BASIS FOR RESOURCE CHOICE		
		Career/ Academic Interest	Previous relationship with RP	Site for specific credit
OPERATING STRATEGY FOR USE OF PROJECT PLAN	Pre-planning	1	2	3
	Post facto write-up	4	5	6
	Creation for credit	7	8	9

Figure 4. Matrix: Devising and Implementing Projects.

*It is noted that the FWL/EBCE developers intended that credit assignment be based on performance, using the package goals as indicators.

Each of the cells generated by the matrix represents a particular student "path" of completing projects. Cell 1 is the "ideal path" in terms of the original Far West project goals. The Orientation period and the miniproject focus on the utilization of this path, and students are counseled by their LC's to follow it whenever possible. Although it is a path that only a small number of students consistently take, almost every student will have at least one project that approaches this ideal pattern.

Cell 7 on the matrix might be called the path of "Wheelin' and Dealin'". A student has specific interests or prior competencies which are pursued throughout the semester or year, generally with some tangible product in mind. When the time for credit accounting is near, a project plan is devised which will maximize the amount of credit earned.

Cells 8 and 9 could be characterized as the "paths of least resistance". Actual utilization of community resources may be extensive (cell 8) or tangential (cell 9); what is generally common to both categories is the last-minute perfunctory creation of a project plan.

The paths followed by most Far West students tend to fall along the dimension represented by cells 4, 5, and 6. Although these paths deviate from the ideal in the planning aspect, and credit requirements may determine much of the students' activity, the site experiences to which they are led are valuable ones, and there is some concern with the quality of the final product.

Most of the projects completed by any given student will tend to emerge from a single operating strategy, with resource choice the main variable. However, given the proper set of conditions--a high level of interest combined with an enthusiastic RP--any student may produce the ideal project.

In April of 1975, a Far West LC took a survey of the various activities of the students attending one of his Advisory Group Meetings. This survey (presented as Figure 5) gives an indication of the various modes employed by students in creating their projects, and of the second semester shift of student energy from projects to other structured means of acquiring credit.

STUDENT	PROJECTS With Plan	IN PROGRESS Without Plan	TUTOR-IALS	EXTERNAL COURSES	CREDITS
A	1	0	4	0	3
B	2	1	0	0	2
C	1	1	5	0	4
D	1	0	4	0	4
E	1	1	3	2	3.5
F	1	0	3	0	3
G	1	1	0	0	2
H	3	0	2	0	2.5
I	1	1	2	0	2.5
J	2	1	3	1	3
K	2	0	2	0	3
L	0	1	2	0	3
M	0	0	4	0	2
N	3	1	0	0	3
14	19	8	34	3*	40.5

*This particular group was atypical in that it consisted of Black students, who are less likely to take external courses.

Figure 5. Survey of Student Activities.

After eliciting this information from the students in his Advisory Group, the LC commented, "This looks pitiful!" Further questioning of the students revealed an even sorrier picture; students had counted as having "a project with a plan" if they had some vague idea for a project plan, but had not yet submitted this document.

Our own knowledge of these students led us, in addition, to conclude: that many of the projects supposedly in progress were in fact theoretical, and were not yet commenced; that project plans, if they existed at all, might bear little relationship to the students' actual activities; that some projects might be dropped in the end-of-semester rush, and others added; that the credit anticipated from Tutorials might not be awarded due to insufficient attendance; and therefore, that credit expectations as noted here were totally unrealistic.

This survey was taken by the LC because mid-April was the time of least program-related activity among students, and he hoped, by pointing out how "pitiful" their record was, to spur them into action. Had he taken this survey at another time, such as the mid-point of the first semester, an entirely different pattern of student effort (especially on projects) would have emerged.

Whatever mode of project creation students employ, virtually every project will lead them into greater community contact, which is a major goal of the Far West program. An important form of learning which cannot be documented in project plans is students' increased familiarity with the resources available in the community, and their competence in utilizing them. As Adam describes this process, "I grew up here, but I never knew Oakland before. Now I know the Bay area much better than I did. I'm not so shy, and I won't hesitate to call up people I never knew before." And, one LC commented, "It's impressive to take a 15-year old kid and tell him to go somewhere twenty miles away. They don't need directions, they know how to find out how to get there." Needless to say, this is an invaluable survival skill in an urban environment. The experience of students at Far West, then, has produced an expansion and elaboration of their previously limited paths through the community.

Despite their urban backgrounds, few Far West students had a very wide circle of contacts prior to their entry into the program. Their social experiences were limited to family, friends, and small peer groups at neighborhood schools. Far West changed all this. They met Congressmen, County Supervisors, policemen, disc jockeys, radicals, corporation executives, newspaper women, chemists, Nobel Prize winners, college professors, peace activists, museum directors, militant women, artists, dancers, astrologers, musicians, nuns, bank tellers, judges, engineers, journalists, computer techniciars, secretaries and anthropologists. This list does not include all the people that Far West students worked with, but it gives an idea of the range of personalities,

social positions, and places within the local political and economic structure. This broadening of social horizons eluded documentation, and it may take the students several years to become aware of its full effects. They do realize, however, their increased comfort and facility in dealing with new kinds of people and the bureaucratic structures they inhabit.

Learning Coordinator-Student Relationship

One intended aspect of the Far West EBCE program which affects all other intended structures is the LC-student relationship. The Learning Coordinators conduct Advisory Group Meetings, Package Meetings and, occasionally, workshops. They help the student plan his program, advising him about graduation requirements, tutorial needs, and project devising and documentation. The LC should also monitor the progress of each student, with attention to both immediate credit needs and long-term goals.

Of increasing importance over the course of the year is the counseling function of the LC. This sometimes involves extensive "crisis management", when students have extreme personal problems such as hard drug use, deteriorating family relations, pregnancy, or legal trouble. The counseling role blends with the LC's academic role in the case of those students who have virtually ceased to function as participating members of the Far West program. LC's find it within the bounds of their relationships with students to offer advice on future plans, choice of colleges, potential careers, and on their attitudes towards society and its institutions.

Much time is spent with students that concerns projects. LC's may suggest project topics and ideas, help students identify their own interests and blend them into a project, locate suitable resources, and evaluate the students' documentation of their own work. LC's are also supposed to do some amount of site visiting, and though there is rarely time for this job, the LC does maintain at least telephone contact with RP's--especially those with whom a student is having difficulty.

The personal quality of the student's relationship with his LC is a critical determinant of his over-all response to the Far West program. In a sense, there are 108 different Far West programs-as many as there are

students--since each student has a particular operating strategy for dealing with projects, his own attitude towards attendance at structured group activities, and a unique personal relationship with his LC.

We observed several identifiable "styles" of interaction with students. The notion of style is quite elusive, and is largely dependent upon the personalities of the specific individuals chosen to fill the LC role. However, several structural features of the LC's as a group influenced the success or failure of this role in the program.

First, the LC's varied along many dimensions: male/female, black/white, lower/middle class background, age, personal and career experiences, and their outside interests. Although students were assigned to one LC prior to Orientation, there was sufficient program flexibility to allow students to work with whomever they felt most comfortable, regardless of their actual LC. Some students developed a relationship with the Operations Director whereby he assumed many LC functions; other members of the staff were also utilized in this fashion, though to a lesser degree. Thus, a combination of the diversity in staff characteristics, and the inherent flexibility of the program made it possible for the majority of students to develop at least one productive working relationship with a Far West employee.

The LC's also varied in their respective interpretations of the prevailing Far West ideology that students have the ultimate responsibility for choosing and managing their own programs. LC's concurred with students in their rejection of the authoritarianism of traditional schools, but the LC's as a group differed in the degree to which they adopted a laissez-faire approach. By the middle of the second semester most of the LC's had converged upon a common perspective: students who had demonstrated success in managing their own programs were given advice and guidance upon request, but strict deadlines and structures were imposed upon students whose work had been so minimal as to endanger their chances to earn required credits. The LC's choice of strategy in dealing with students depended upon their interpretation of student needs, and reflected many months of experience in working with them.

Although no LC was universally successful with all his students, the least successful style was an attempt to implement the Far West program as a set of bureaucratic procedures, applied uniformly to all students. The

students also tended to complain as much about LC's who provided them with no structure, as about those whom they perceived as excessively rigid and authoritarian. What they required of their LC's was the delicate balance between structure and flexibility. As Edward observed, "They mistake accountability for authority and force," and Adam added that, "You can be strict from the beginning and loosen up, but you can never be loose and then strict."

What seems to have contributed to the over-all success of the student-LC relationship was the small-group nature of Far West. Students disliked large, impersonal institutions, and felt easily "lost." Many had chosen to come to Far West because they expected to receive more attention than traditional schools ever managed to provide. "I wanted to be treated as a person, not a number." (In fact, students who had attended Far West the previous year complained that the program had deteriorated when it became larger.)

Related to this was the informal nature of LC-student relationship. Students and LC's were on a first-name basis, and spent time socializing, joking and sharing personal histories, as well as in program procedures. Students came to appreciate or disrespect LC's as persons rather than institutional categories. As one LC told us, "They know that just because we're older, it doesn't mean that we're wiser."

Informal Social Structure

In addition to the intended activities of the Far West program, an informal social structure developed within the school as the year progressed. Small networks of students coalesced into fairly permanent groups which followed predictable patterns of utilization of space and time within the Resource Center. The student groups also shared paths through the community. While the nature of this informal organization was derived from the particular student population, and the community from which it was drawn, some structural features and their effects upon the program operation will be of interest to replicators.

The program draws students from all the school districts of Oakland. These adolescents differ in ethnic and class backgrounds, lifestyles, success in traditional schools, concern with academic preparation, and in their preferences for extra-curricular activities. While many

students indicated that they had looked forward to meeting new people in the Far West program, many of the groups they in fact formed were based on previous acquaintance. Faced with a multitude of strangers at the very beginning of the year, the students immediately latched onto others from their home high schools, whether or not these had been their friends the year before. Other, smaller groups which formed early in the year were based on sibling ties, male-female courtships, and male pair-bonding. This pattern of group formation on the basis of previous acquaintance may be expected in any program which brings students from many feeder schools into contact on neutral territory.

Perhaps the largest social group at Far West consisted exclusively of a group of Black women. Only a few of the Black women in the program were not members of this group, which claimed the Ladies' Lounge as its turf. Most of the members of this group were sophomores and juniors who were in their first year at Far West; the Black female non-members were likely to be second-year Far Westers. This group was not formed due to any feeling of defensiveness or need for protection, since Black-White relations at Far West were remarkedly free of tension and hostility. Nevertheless, both Blacks and Whites apparently felt they had more to share with members of their own races, since the social class backgrounds of these two groups had made their interests quite different. As one Black male wrote, "These two groups are completely different as far as social activities and academic activities are concerned. I've found out that it is not out of prejudice that these two groups do not interreact with each other. I think it is merely from their social backgrounds."

Black males also tended to form social groups within the school premises, but the basic unit was most often a pair, or group of three. These small units came together or joined with the Black women to make larger groups.

Shared or common interests also accounted for the formation of many other new groups within the school. Budding musicians often brought their instruments with them and "jammed" in the student lounge. (This was one of the very few activities that brought together students from many informal groups.) Another set of students shared a pre-occupation with marijuana, and spent time together (off school grounds) blowing dope, and discussing its sources and modes of utilization. Other groups which might be identified in terms of common interests were "the groupies" (avid fans of notorious rock superstars), the lunch-bunches, the boozers, and the window-shoppers.

These groups had fluctuating memberships, with smaller subgroups coming together or moving separately through their various activities. Some students felt most comfortable moving from one group to another, with no firm friendships in any one group; other students were "loners" who would look at group interactions, but seldom join in. The smaller subgroups moved easily over the entire school premises, but the larger groups tended to have their special territories.

Space-time surveys made throughout the observation period revealed that both formal and informal groups have well-defined spaces, and also exhibit specific patterns of time-cycling during the day. A sample daily survey is given on the pages to follow, prefaced by a floor-plan of the Far West School (Maps 1-7).

At the time these space-time surveys were made, there were 105 students at Far West (plus or minus one or two virtual drop-outs). Roughly 25 percent of the total student population was extremely marginal in terms of their participation in Far West activities. Careful census work done by students in the course of an Anthropology project (for Social Science credit) demonstrated that over a two-week period only 78 students put in an appearance at Far West. It is possible that at least some of the remaining 27 students were present, but for periods of time so brief as to elude observation. Most of the students who attended Far West regularly clearly did so both for academic and social reasons.

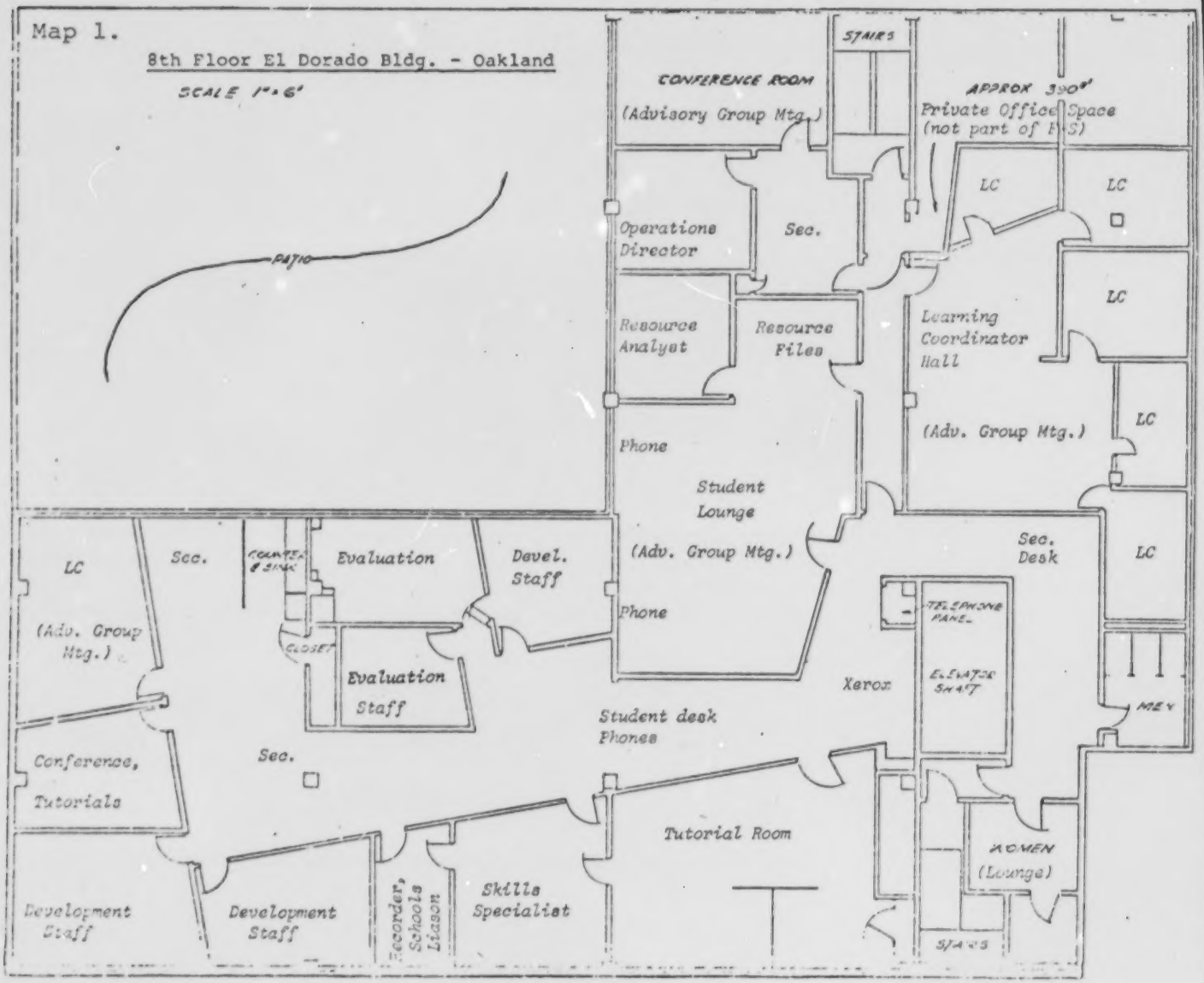
Membership in the informal social groups had important effects upon student participation in the intended structures of the program. For some students, the social interaction that took place in the context of these groups became their primary activity at Far West. When scheduled program events such as Tutorials conflicted with the plans of their cohorts, they chose to participate in the latter. Alternatively, they might bring to a meeting one or more friends (who did not belong there), and their animated chatter would disrupt the entire session. To balance this perspective, it must be understood that students who might not have come to school at all showed up to be with their friends, and participated at least minimally, in some of the formal structured activities for which they were scheduled.

A major interaction mode within the student groups involved mutual assistance in school-related work, and exchange of information regarding projects, RP's, and documentation. Individual project plans, for instance, were often a product of group brainstorming. It was

Map 1.

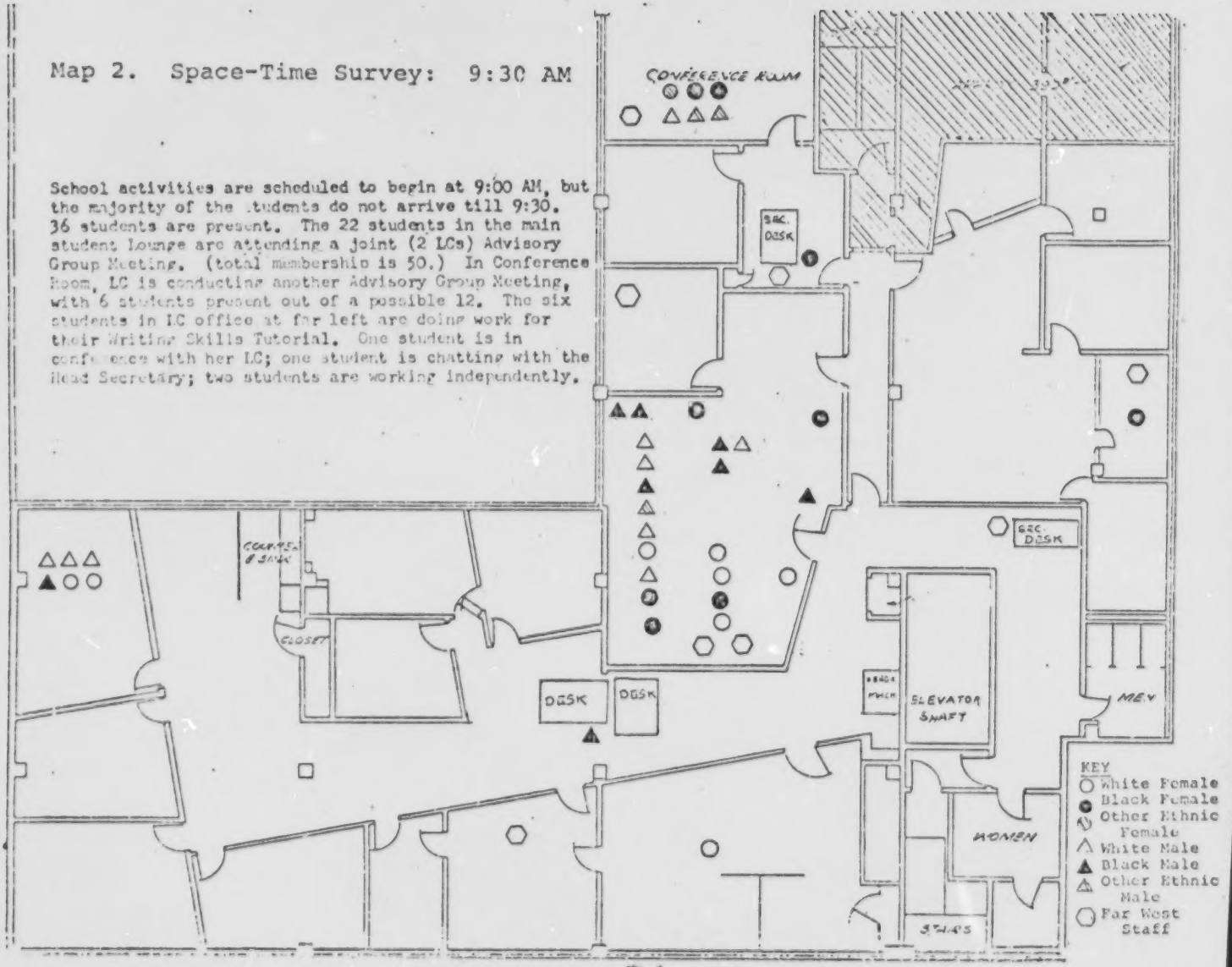
8th Floor El Dorado Bldg. - Oakland

SCALE 1" = 6'



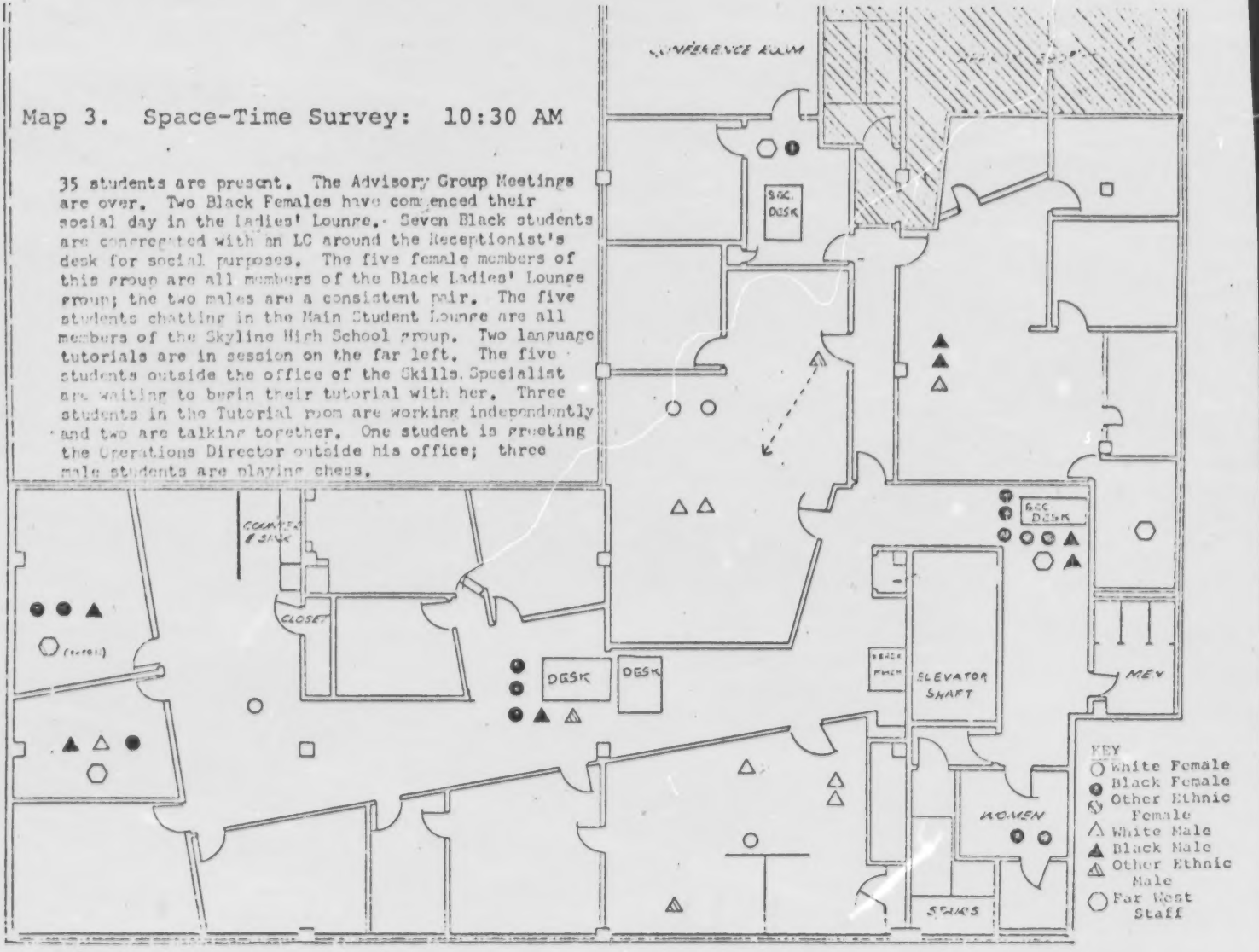
Map 2. Space-Time Survey: 9:30 AM

School activities are scheduled to begin at 9:00 AM, but the majority of the students do not arrive till 9:30. 36 students are present. The 22 students in the main student lounge are attending a joint (2 LCs) Advisory Group Meeting. (total membership is 50.) In Conference Room, LC is conducting another Advisory Group Meeting, with 6 students present out of a possible 12. The six students in LC office at far left are doing work for their Writing Skills Tutorial. One student is in conference with her LC; one student is chatting with the Head Secretary; two students are working independently.



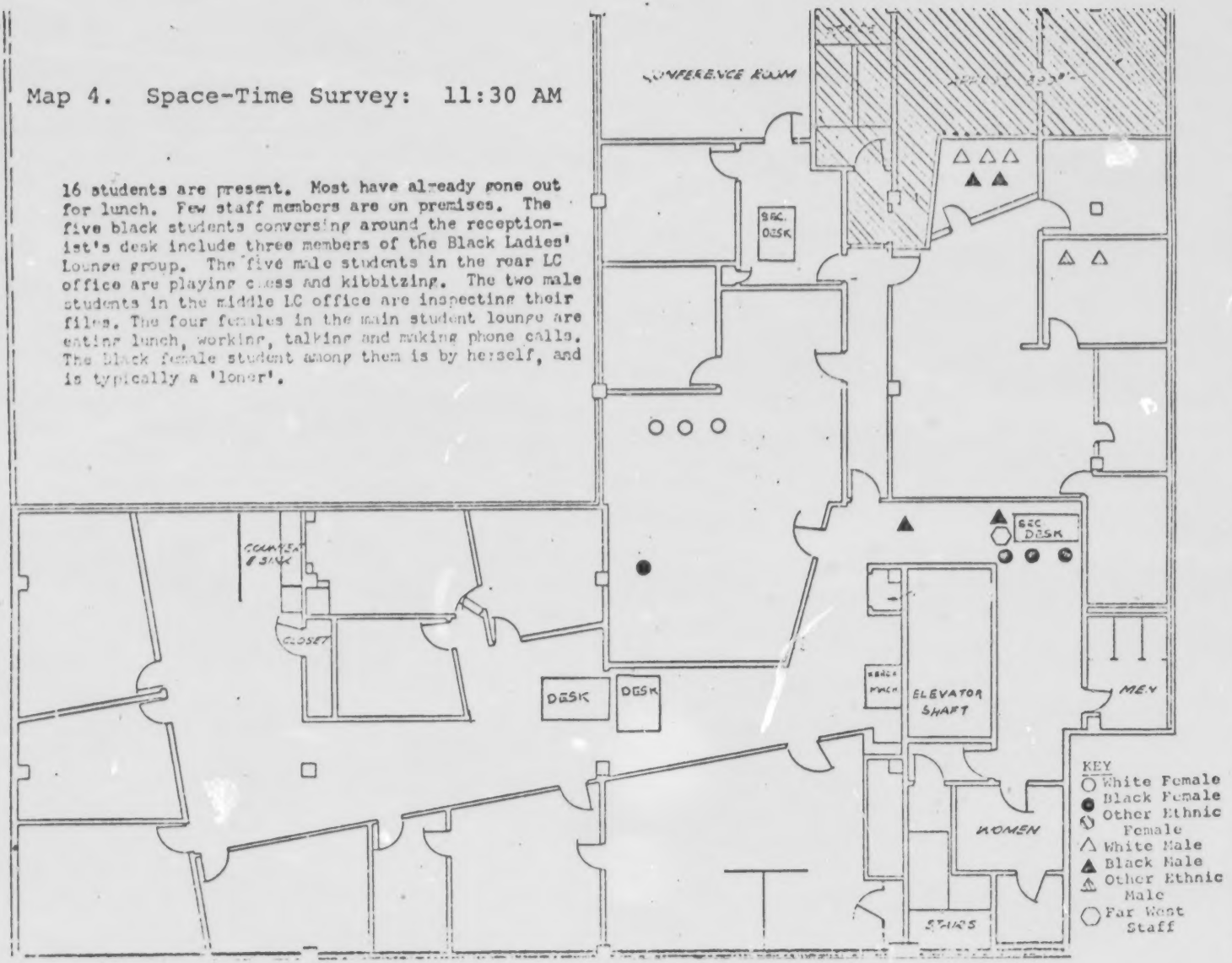
Map 3. Space-Time Survey: 10:30 AM

35 students are present. The Advisory Group Meetings are over. Two Black Females have commenced their social day in the Ladies' Lounge. Seven Black students are congregated with an LC around the Receptionist's desk for social purposes. The five female members of this group are all members of the Black Ladies' Lounge group; the two males are a consistent pair. The five students chatting in the Main Student Lounge are all members of the Skyline High School group. Two language tutorials are in session on the far left. The five students outside the office of the Skills Specialist are waiting to begin their tutorial with her. Three students in the Tutorial room are working independently and two are talking together. One student is greeting the Operations Director outside his office; three male students are playing chess.



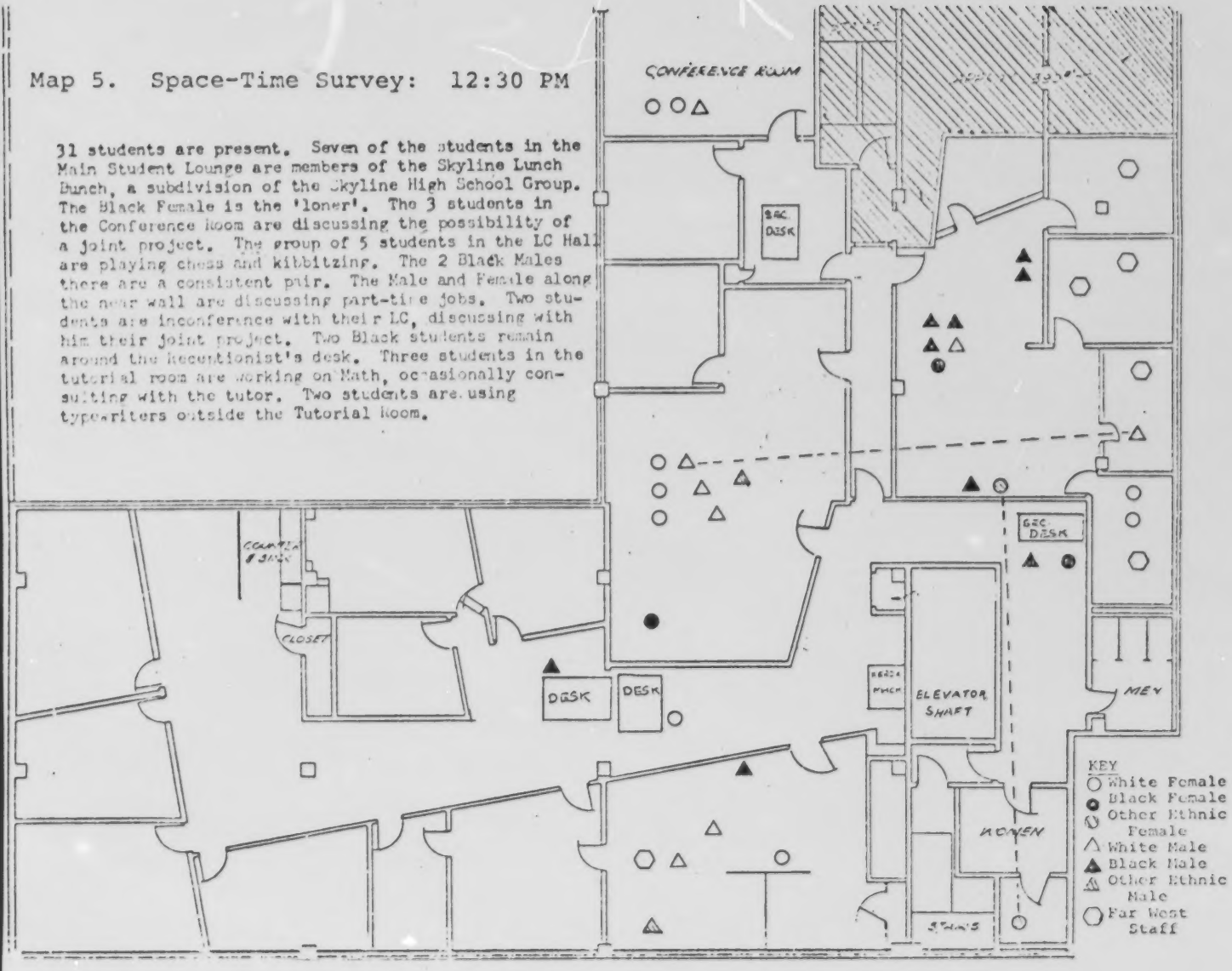
Map 4. Space-Time Survey: 11:30 AM

16 students are present. Most have already gone out for lunch. Few staff members are on premises. The five black students conversing around the receptionist's desk include three members of the Black Ladies' Lounge group. The five male students in the rear LC office are playing chess and kibbitzing. The two male students in the middle LC office are inspecting their files. The four females in the main student lounge are eating lunch, working, talking and making phone calls. The black female student among them is by herself, and is typically a 'loner'.



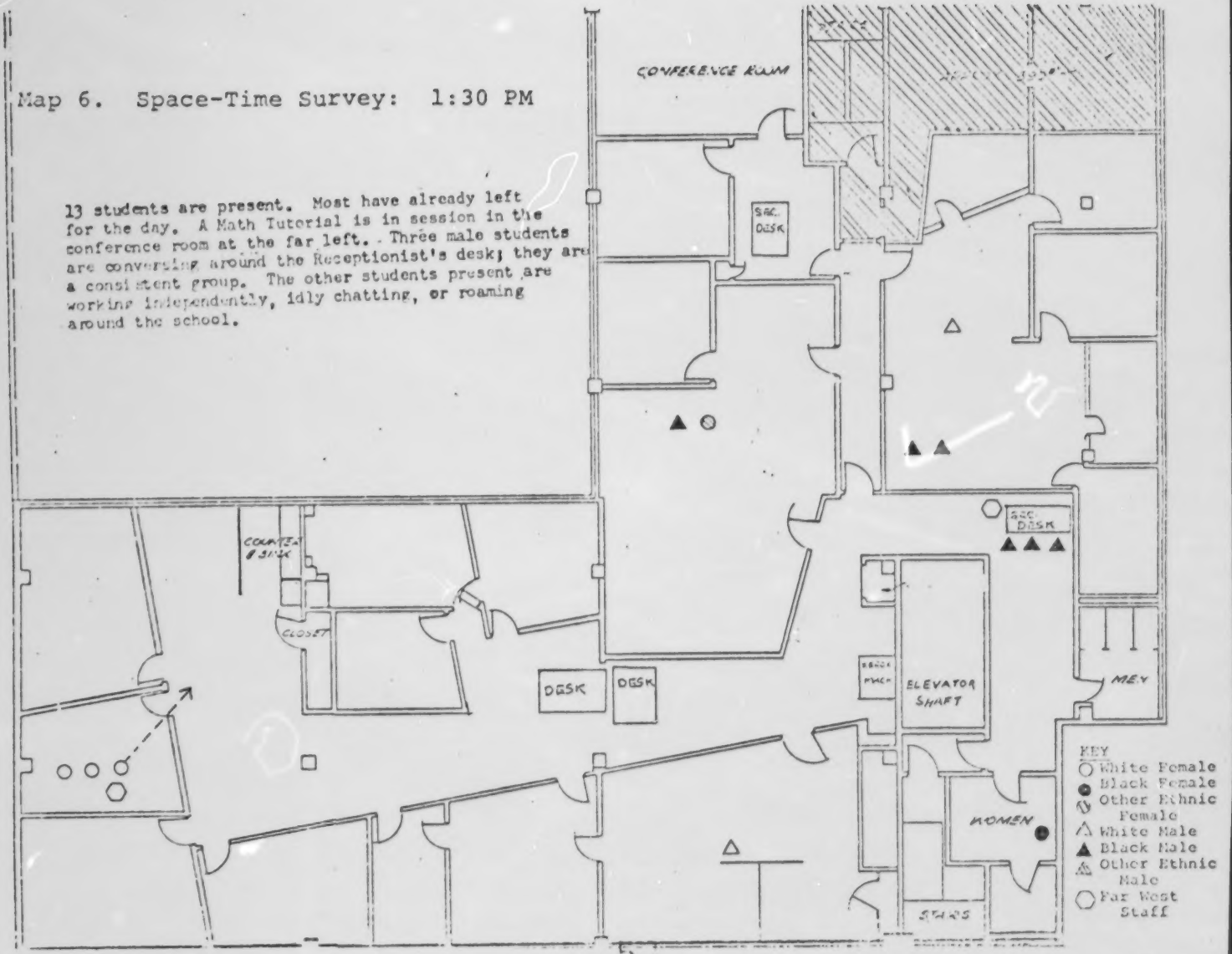
Map 5. Space-Time Survey: 12:30 PM

31 students are present. Seven of the students in the Main Student Lounge are members of the Skyline Lunch Bunch, a subdivision of the Skyline High School Group. The Black Female is the 'loner'. The 3 students in the Conference Room are discussing the possibility of a joint project. The group of 5 students in the LC Hall are playing chess and kibbitzing. The 2 Black Males there are a consistent pair. The Male and Female along the near wall are discussing part-time jobs. Two students are inconference with their LC, discussing with him their joint project. Two Black students remain around the Recentionist's desk. Three students in the tutorial room are working on Math, occasionally consulting with the tutor. Two students are using typewriters outside the Tutorial Room.



Map 6. Space-Time Survey: 1:30 PM

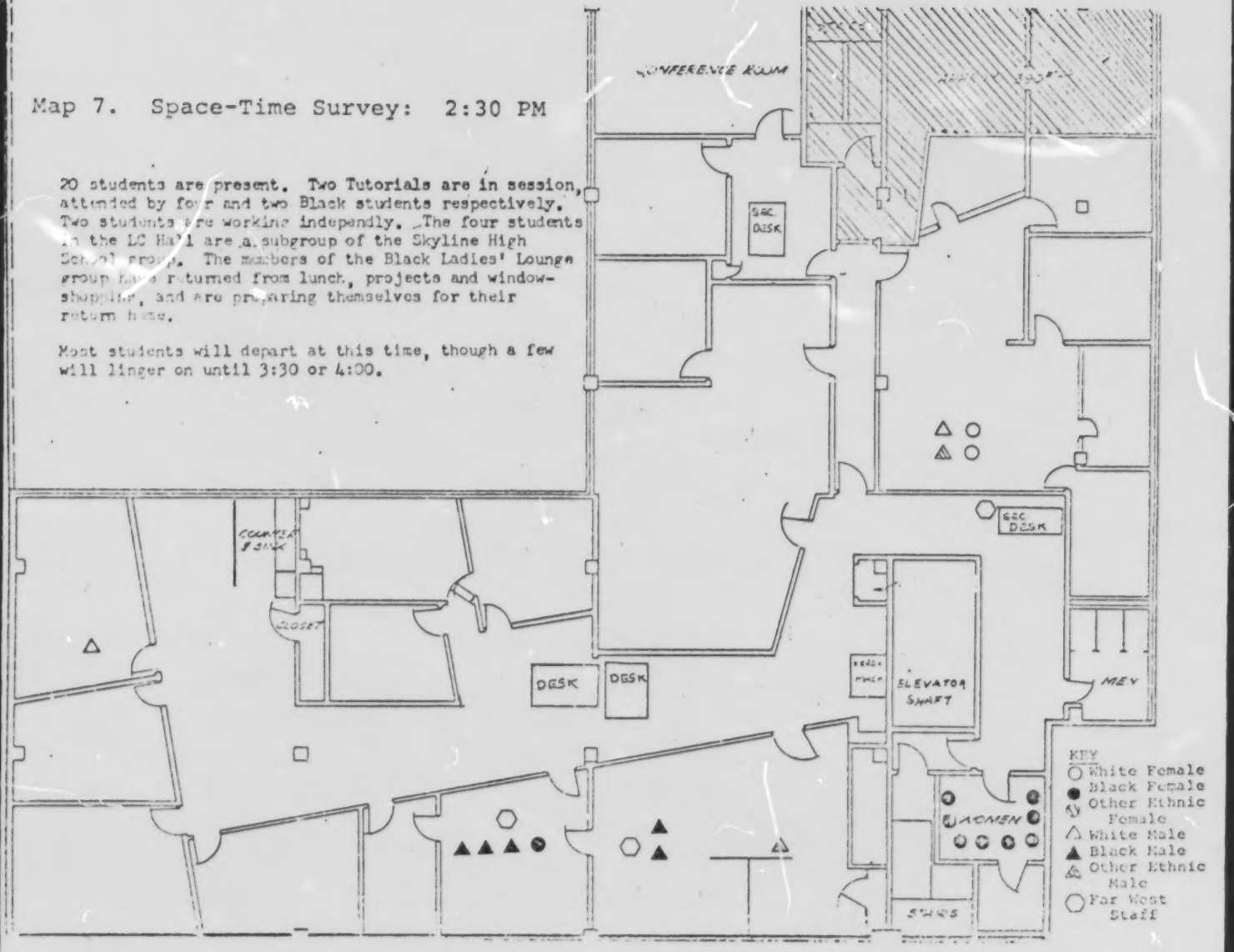
13 students are present. Most have already left for the day. A Math Tutorial is in session in the conference room at the far left. Three male students are conversing around the Receptionist's desk; they are a consistent group. The other students present are working independently, idly chatting, or roaming around the school.



Map 7. Space-Time Survey: 2:30 PM

20 students are present. Two Tutorials are in session, attended by four and two Black students respectively. Two students are working independly. The four students in the LC Hall are a subgroup of the Skyline High School group. The members of the Black Ladies' Lounge group have returned from lunch, projects and window-shopping, and are preparing themselves for their return home.

Most students will depart at this time, though a few will linger on until 3:30 or 4:00.



quite common, too, for joint projects to be done by two or more members of a single student peer group. This was especially common among the Black Ladies' Lounge Group, subgroups of which did all their projects together. While White students were somewhat more likely to embark upon individual projects, two friends would frequently plan and complete a project together. Group work was not only more enjoyable for Far West students, it also increased the likelihood of their involvement in interesting work at a site, and their chances for completing the project on time. As one student told us, "When you go to a site by yourself you feel really funny. You don't know what to do. When you go in a group they pay more attention to you."

The most important lateral flow of information soon came to be confined within these student groups, and by mid-year they had taken over many of the intended functions of the Advisory Group meetings and Package meetings. This is clearly one of the reasons why these latter structures came to be considered "empty": their content had been transferred to groups of students' own devising.

Ideally, the formal groups should act as nexes for the exchange of information and attitudes across informal group boundaries, since the composition of Advisory and Package groups cross-cuts the informal peer associations. However, no group generated by the formal structure ever achieved the sense of unity that was so apparent in peer interactions.

The student-devised Social Science Workshop was intended to restore to the format of the Package Meeting the information-flow function it had lost. Students were aware of increasing isolation within their peer groups, and hoped, through this cross-cutting workshop, to generate a productive interchange of ideas and experiences. It was created, however, primarily by the members of a home high school group, and although they made efforts to incorporate representatives of other groups, they were successful in recruiting only one other small subgroup. Their goals might more fully have been realized had they commenced their effort at the start of the second semester, instead of near its close.

The students themselves observed that the only "live" structures within Far West were those directly concerned with helping students get credit: the Tutorials, the LC-student relationship and the workshops. By focussing on the problem of credit acquisition, the devisers of the Social Science Workshop hoped to profit from this overwhelming and universal student concern.

CHAPTER 4

STUDENT VOICES

The students whose case histories will be presented in this chapter were not randomly chosen. They were, rather, self-selected, since they opted to participate in the Anthropology Workshop, and it was in this way that we, as investigators, became familiar with their opinions and attitudes. However, they do exemplify the range of possible student "paths" through the Far West EBCE program structure. They demonstrate a diversity of motivations in applying to Far West, in the initial specificity of their interests, in their attitudes towards academic work, in their relationships to the informal social structure at the school, and in their respective commitments to its ideological goals. There were other student "paths" which we were much less successful in observing closely: those who chose to spend little time at the Far West School complex (regardless of their independent pursuit of projects), and those who responded negatively to the personal styles of the investigators, which were seen as basically intellectual. There were, in addition, a few students who felt that their performance at Far West had been "over-evaluated", and who were unwilling to subject themselves to further scrutiny.

Mateus - Wheelin' & Dealin'

Mateus, a Black 17-year-old, describes his academic status as that of "a Junior, more or less. I dropped out of McClymonds High School in the middle of my Sophomore year." His last recorded grades were five "F's" and a "C", with one-half credit completed for the year. Mateus was uncomfortable in the traditional school environment: "I hate to be confined and told what to do. I need to have my own choice. Requirements are okay, but I have to be able to complete them in my own way." His perception of himself was that he was "street-wise", capable of moving easily in the community, and more accustomed to dealing with adults than with his peers. He felt out of place in school, where he was "treated like a child", and where he was forced to learn facts and skills that seemed unrelated to his life.

After leaving high school, Mateus entered the world of work, and "found out that you don't earn much without a degree. I was a gym teacher at Sacred Heart, earning only four dollars an hour." His job was a good one, but Mateus' sights were set much higher. "I wanted a diploma, and I was looking for a school. I was thinking of going to the Street Academy, when I heard about Far West on the radio and from a friend of my brother, who was going there. The program provided experience, and it looked good." Mateus had high hopes for Far West School: "I came here to get away from the same four walls. I got tired of seeing the same faces in the same places, and being locked in. There was no freedom....School was a dirty word to me, I could not stand to go. Far West was a good thing for me to get into. It was all the things a school could be, and all the things I would like all the schools to be. Now maybe I will have the chance to show myself, as well as everyone else, what I can do, and also what I am worth."

The initial Orientation period at Far West, however, was something of a disappointment. "It was a waste of time--three weeks down the drain. They were just orienting us to different forms you have to fill out, and that was boring. I did learn one thing: I learned exactly what they wanted, and exactly how to do it."

In Mateus' long-term plan, he indicated an interest in improving his reading and writing skills, recognizing his weakness in these areas, even though he admitted, "I don't like to read or write too much." He was initially scheduled for a Grammar tutorial, but attended it only twice, and received no credit. "It was dull and boring. I couldn't adjust my mind to relate to it." Mateus was also scheduled for a French tutorial, and although he claims, "I can't relate to academic skills too much", his performance there indicates the difference that the level of his interest can make. "I was very interested in speaking the language. If I miss, I make up." The personal relationship Mateus established with his French tutor may also have affected his attitude towards this class. "He is a very good tutor. He actually can feel what it's like to be a student 'cause he's one himself. He relates to them on their level. Tutorials are small, so he deals with each student individually." Given this positive attitude, Mateus' performance in French improved steadily, according to his tutor's assessment, and he received .5 credit for the course.

Contrasting sharply with his mixed response to the tutorials was Mateus' wholehearted enthusiasm for projects

of his own devising. One of his expressed career interests was the position of technical director in the video field, and he had previously worked with videotape on at least one occasion. His miniproject consisted of a videotape dealing with Far West School itself, in which he interviewed students and LC's about the program. The School arranged for Mateus to have access to Far West Laboratory's technical center, where he used the recording and editing equipment of the center, and had advice from experts on the technical aspects of videotaping. For this project he also recruited as RP's several people working at a community TV station who, though they agreed to help him, could not spare the time to become RP's for other Far West students.

The contrast between the work Mateus was assigned, and the work he took upon himself is further emphasized by a comparison of his project plan with the final product. The plan, reproduced as Figure 6, is incomplete, unclear at many points, sloppy, and reflects little of the actual work he intended to do. Mateus' final product was a videotape that he showed to an audience of students and staff, and which received this evaluation from his LC: "Superb in all respects. It shows just what can open, when the right combination is put together." A fellow student, who was also familiar with visual media, noted, "Technical quality good for serious amateur. Production aspect okay. Overall, well put together."

Mateus refused to take project plans very seriously, considering them to have little value for him. "They have them so that you can look back and see what you're doing. I keep it all up here in my head. It's not really all that mandatory as far as I'm concerned. I can do it. It's obvious; anyone can see it."

Mateus' miniproject earned him one-half credit, and represented 75 hours of documented work. His second videotape, done in cooperation with another Far West student, was much more ambitious. It was intended to earn him a full credit, half in Photography, and half in related Social Science. The videotape, which was entitled "The Start" focussed on the Intercommunity Youth Institute, a school run by the Oakland Black Panthers. Mateus recorded the instructional materials and techniques employed in the Panther school, and included an interview with Erica Huggins, who was the Institute Director. The quality of the videotape was excellent, and Mateus used many professional editing techniques in

far west school	PROJECT GOALS, INDICATORS, AND EVALUATION (See INSTRUCTIONS on Reverse Side)	Page 3 of

Student MATEUS LC Project Title VIDEO Date due 9/27 Date comp. 10/18

Check goals + indicators carefully.	For Indicators		For Evaluator's Use		
Goals and Indicators	Due Date	Evaluator	Date	Initials & Rating	Comments
A. TO FIND OUT MORE ABOUT ~~[illegible]~~ VIDEO TAPING.	10/18	L.C.			For next project work carefully with your LC on goals + indicators.
B. TO FIND OUT WHAT I ~~[illegible]~~ CAN DO IN VIDEO TAPING	10/18	L.C. AND A.G.			
C. AND TO SHOW OTHERS WHAT CAN BE DONE IN ~~[illegible]~~ CR. ~~[illegible]~~ VIDEO. ~~[illegible]~~ 10/11	10/18	L.C. AND A.G.			
~~[illegible]~~ TAPE.					
D. AND TO FIND OUT HOW LONG IT WOULD TAKE TO PUT THIS ~~[illegible]~~ TOGETHER.	10/18	~~[illegible]~~ & ~~[illegible]~~			
E. ~~[illegible]~~ AND TO SHOW SOME OF THE ~~[illegible]~~ THOUGHTS OF THE SCHOOL	10/18	~~[illegible]~~ AG.			

USE AS MANY COPIES OF THIS PAGE AS ARE NECESSARY

Figure 6. Mateus' Miniproject Plan.

its final preparation. In conjunction with the tape, and as part of this project, Mateus prepared an essay about the Intercommunity Institute. Ms. Huggins, who was his RP, read this essay and insisted that it be revised to include more specific details about the Institute's operations. Mateus did this with the assistance of the Far West Skills Specialist, who helped him in its composition. To document his half credit in Photography, an oral report was given to his LC dealing with careers in that field.

"We learned a lot about videotape," Mateus said about this project. "We actually put in more hours of work than we claimed. It was about three months of work. We directed and produced, did camera work, titles and special effects." He asserts simply, "I know a lot about it," and his RP at the Far West Laboratory technical center concurs. "He was more advanced in videotape production than any FWS student. Has a solid base knowledge about videotape production."

With one credit for his second videotape, .5 for career education, .5 for French and another .5 for Physical Education, Mateus earned a total of 2.5 credits for his first semester at Far West. This level of accomplishment on a per-semester basis is generally sufficient for on-schedule accumulation of all graduation credit requirements.

Mateus and his LC were both pleased by this semester of involvement with school work--Mateus' first such in several years. Nevertheless, the LC tried to convince him that more basic skills were needed, and that he should develop his capacity for planning. The LC reported that "Mateus spends too much time in the area of videotape productions. He becomes totally involved in video, so much so that he forgets about the goals and purposes of EBCE. I know what to do, and have started dealing with it, e.g., individual conferences discussing with him the essentials of 'Basic Skills'." Mateus' LC felt that his counseling technique during the first semester had been ineffective with this student. "I was being more authoritative, really getting on him because he wasn't following through on plans and goals. The only thing happening from that was just a lot of dialogue between us. He always had an answer for everything."

One semester was clearly long enough for Mateus to understand the Far West program structure sufficiently well to manipulate it to his own advantage. After Mateus' miniproject in video, his LC told him to get into different

things and learn about careers in other fields. Mateus then went over his LC's head, and obtained permission from the Operations Director to proceed with further involvement in video by carefully withholding the information that his LC had advised him otherwise. Mateus said, "That's how you deal with the system. It's not what you know, it's who you know. So if you can deal with the person, you can get what you want."

Manipulations such as these do not go long unnoticed by the Far West staff. They are not seen simply as an "easy way out", but rather as important learning experiences in and of themselves. The LC's believe that living in a highly bureaucratized society involves just such learning. As one LC said, "I'm not so easily fooled, and if they can get something past me, they deserve the credit." Mateus' LC was not angered by his manipulation, but warned him about the possible consequences of such strategies: "You have to be careful of people along the line."

Mateus' program for the second semester was much more academically oriented. He continued in French and Physical Education, and participated in the Anthropology Workshop. A number of projects emerged from his increasingly critical understanding of the internal structure of Far West, and he began working with a group of like-minded students. Their major complaint was that structured group activities at Far West were, for the most part, "empty". "The Advisory groups were worthless," Mateus stated, and he recalls having attended the Package Meetings only twice. "I didn't see anything where it was helping me out." These students were aware of the futility of complaint without positive action, and they decided to develop their own Social Science Workshop to replace the Package Meetings. They consulted with the Operations Director on this, and received his full support for their efforts: it was agreed that students would receive academic credit for their "alternative" Social Science Workshop so long as their activities were fully documented.

The initial level of enthusiasm for this joint project was very high. Group efforts were generally held to be more satisfying and more productive than work on an individual basis by the Black students at Far West. Mateus told us that "Every project I've worked on here has been in a group. I believe I get more accomplished by working in a group. I have more time to get things accomplished." The Social Science Workshop project was

also perceived as a chance to increase group cohesion in the school. The students originating the group intended to help each other--as well as those outside--in devising projects in the social sciences. Another of their goals involved inviting RP's to address the students and suggest possible project topics to them. Although this group effort was not totally successful in achieving certain of its goals, its formation alone indicated that Mateus and the other co-founders had a positive commitment to the aims of the Far West program and that they believed in their power to alter its structure for the better.

Mateus anticipated earning as many as two credits for his participation in the Social Science Workshop: one-half unit for American Government, and similar credit for History, English, and Advertising. "I don't know if I'm going to get all that credit, but I know I'm going to get credit for at least trying."

The Workshop led to other activities that explored Social Science fields through analysis of group dynamics at Far West School. Mateus worked on a group Anthropology project that had Far West as its focus, his own contribution consisting of an analysis of Black-White group relations. We quote from his final product: "While doing my research on the Black and White groups it has come to my attention that these two groups are completely different as far as social activities and academic activities are concerned. I've found out that it is not out of prejudice that these two groups do not interreact with each other. I think it is merely from their social backgrounds. I believe that these two groups are better off as they are and nothing should be changed or rearranged within these two racial groups, in other words, the groups are cool like they are." Our own observations and recommendations are in substantial agreement with those of Mateus.

A final project in the second semester was the making of an animation, which was done in collaboration with three other students. This, too, was concerned with Far West School, and attempted to illustrate some of the problems inherent in its program structure.

All in all, Mateus hoped to receive as many as five and one-half credits for his work in the second semester: two for the Social Science Workshop, one or one and a half for his participation in the Anthropology project, one credit for the film, and one-half each for French and Physical Education. Far West generally allows only 4

credits per semester per student; Mateus hoped to apply the extra 1.5 credits to his first semester record, thus bringing his credit earned for the whole year to a total of eight. Implicit in this operation is a kind of "numbers game". Each credit requires the documentation of 150 hours of work; 5.5 credits earned implies 825 hours of work over an 18 week period, or about 46 hours of work per week! However, when students do projects in groups, they may each count as their own time the hours spent by others, thus multiplying their potential claims for credit.

In our last interview with Mateus, which occurred near the end of the school year, he was uncertain about the number of credits he would be permitted for the work he could document. There was undoubtedly a solid core of actual accomplishment which he could present, and to increase his credit allotment he would rely upon his usual manipulation of staff and regulations.

During the second semester, Mateus' LC had changed his manner of dealing with this highly independent student. "I laid out what he had to do, and if he didn't follow through, I wouldn't recommend credit. At this point he worked with us and got a few priorities together." In this way, Mateus' LC simply turned over to him the responsibility of managing his own program, a situation he was fully capable of handling. His LC says, "Mateus has made a tremendous amount of progress in responsibility. He's matured quite a bit since September in communicating with people, and he doesn't have as much hostility now as he did in the Fall....I have a lot of confidence in him. But he hasn't narrowed his expectations down. It's okay to strive for perfection but you have to be flexible and face up to your own shortcomings."

Mateus' own assessment of Far West's effect on him also centers on his increased communicative capacity: "I've learned to express myself a little bit more thoroughly. Most of the other things I had been training myself for before." Although Mateus appears to have learned very little in the standard academic sense, this minimal accomplishment must be compared to his expectations of what a year in a traditional school might have taught him. And, it is obvious that his projects involved him in a form of learning that he considered to be of real value.

Mateus' manipulative attitude towards institutional frameworks antedated his coming to Far West; it was part

of a strategy he had previously learned in dealing with other institutions. What was new, however, was his commitment to the program, and his feeling that program goals were not necessarily in conflict with his own. On occasion, these two sets of goals might even coincide: "I'm doing a lot for myself, and this school has enabled me to do this."

It is Mateus' intention to return to Far West School next year, but beyond that time his plans are less definite. He is considering applying to the University Without Walls, and rates his chances for admission as "very high". His notions about the distant future "have changed so many times I couldn't tell you." His LC doesn't think Mateus has made any real decision about what he will do in life, but adds, "I'm not so sure that it's vital to know what one is going to do two or three years from now."

Tova - In Her Own Fashion

Tova is a sixteen-year-old Sophomore from Bret Harte Junior High School. Although she was a conscientious student, her academic record was only fair: she averaged "C", "B-plus", and "C-plus" in 7th, 8th and 9th grades respectively. Her attendance, she says, "was very poor. I would cut classes to do homework. I never really liked the classwork framework." She was scheduled to attend Skyline High School, but was convinced by her family to apply to Far West instead. Two of her sisters had gone to Far West and gave it a strong recommendation (as did the vice principal of her junior high) on the basis of its positive influence on her eldest sister, who had been on the verge of dropping out. "Her work improved, and she had more interest in school." Her parents appreciated the effect that Far West had on their eldest daughter, but had some doubts about allowing Tova to participate, since she had been so much more successful in the traditional school environment. "They still thought of Far West as a bit of a cop-out as far as academics goes," even though her father, a minister, was a member of the Community Advisory Board at Far West.

One of Tova's main reasons for wishing to come to Far West was her need to escape the oppressive social atmosphere prevalent in the elite suburban schools she

generally attended. "I always felt like such a freak there. I would walk into a class and everyone would look me over to check out what I was wearing. One time I saved up and bought a really beautiful pair of pants. The first day I wore them to school one of my friends said, 'Oh, God! Well, at least they don't have cuffs.'" To our eyes, Tova always appeared extremely well turned out, but we were made to understand, "You have to wear exactly what's 'in', or you're out of it." Tova felt far more comfortable at Far West, where the acceptable modes of female attire on any given day would range from "glitter" to overalls.

Another source of personal oppression to Tova was the status-ranking at traditional schools according to grade level. At Far West, however, "grade level doesn't make that much difference. It's just how well you can do it. I think I can do things as well as Seniors. People form their <u>own</u> groups here, but you can deal with them."

Tova was also interested in Far West because it offered her the opportunity to explore her career interests. "My father," she told us, "has always been a major influence on me. Ever since I was eight years old I've been concerned with community and world problems. I've worked with poor people and I've worked with the handicapped. I've thought about making some kind of social work my life, maybe even entering the Ministry." Tova liked the idea of exploring some alternatives to this long-standing interest. She had a background and continuing interest in music, and hoped to look into some of its career aspects.

In addition, Tova had a number of pragmatic plans for the time she would spend at Far West. She intended to explore careers in business, in order to gain skills which might help her get jobs when she is attending college; she was going to look into typing, accounting, journalism and other media. "That way I'm sure that if one falls through, the others might pick up." Tova also hoped that Far West could help her to graduate early, since students may earn the equivalent of three semesters of credit in a single year. In traditional high schools early graduation means a heavy load of classes; at Far West it means extra work on individually-designed ambitious projects, which Tova found far preferable. It was her plan, too, to take classes at a local community college for credit, which would have been much more difficult to arrange through her home high school.

Tova concurred with most other students in describing the Orientation Period at Far West as "lots of boring meetings. They could have done it in half the time." Her miniproject, however, was a valuable experience: "It was good because you had a limited amount of time to get it done and you could choose whatever you wanted." The miniproject is career-oriented, and so Tova chose to do it on one of her main career interests. She interviewed the head of the Rehabilitation Center for the Mentally and Physically Disabled, though her real concern was with the scope of the rehabilitation field. "What can you do with the top guy? If I had more time I would have worked with the actual rehabilitation workers, but I went to the top guy to have an explanation of all the jobs." The RP gave her several books and pamphlets, which she used to write a report describing the work being done in this field. She also produced a taped interview with her RP, which her LC evaluated as "Excellent".

Tova's documentation for the miniproject was extensive and complete, and in reviewing her work, the Operations Director commented that she had an "excellent mastery of project plan process." But Tova herself remarked, "to tell you the truth I haven't gone by a Project Plan ever. Only one student last semester did a project correctly, and he didn't even know it. They should really tell us, 'You have to do this because we need it'." Many students, including Tova, recognize the advantage of documentation in giving the appearance of full compliance with the program goals. This frees them from lengthy administrative hassles, and allows them to work more or less as they wish, regardless of how that work is reflected in their documentation. One student said, "The secrets of staying here are to stay on good terms with the staff, and to look busy," and Tova's LC remarked, "She knows how to look busy. She knows where everything's at."

Throughout the first semester, Tova received private music lessons, which she expanded into a .5 credit project by including other activities related to music. She wrote several essays (for which she also received some English credit): one on the life of Handel, and a second comparing rock musician Elton John with classical musician Itzhak Perlman. In addition she completed a Career Orientation Guide with the Director of the Oakland Youth Symphony. "If I don't like the Ministry, that's what I would look into. It seemed like a really interesting job, an exciting life.

She started it herself, and look where they are today." Tova also learned how extensive the business apparatus behind a functioning orchestra must be. This complex project illustrates how a variety of interests can be blended together: "I wanted music credit and I wanted to do more than just take lessons, so for Music Theory I did this project."

The determination of credit at Far West takes into account the entire scope of a student's activities for any given semester. In Tova's case, .5 credits in English were assigned on the basis of limited work in a Tutorial, supplemented by essays she wrote while doing other projects. Her English Tutorial didn't work out well, because the tutor was taken off the work-study program at her home college, and had to quit shortly after the semester began. Tova was switched to the Writing Skills Class conducted by the Skills Specialist, about which she says, "I didn't do much work there, but I had enough work on my other projects. I really learned English through the project essays, more than in the tutorials."

Tova participated in two other Tutorials: one in Algebra and another in Spanish. Both of these were fairly successful and she received .5 credits for each. "I did pretty good on those." Although the progress reports from her Algebra tutor indicated only minimal attendance at scheduled sessions, Tova was among the few students to complete the course requirements. She managed this by working through the "Self-Paced Teaching Tape Program". This was unusual, since most students preferred the personal interaction with tutors to working with tapes, which they found boring. However, it fit well into Tova's own preference set for working at her own pace and time. The Spanish tutor reported that her work pattern in that Tutorial similarly involved many absences from scheduled sessions, balanced by individual work and ultimately satisfactory achievement.

Her LC observed, "The only negative observation is that Tova operates on her own schedule, not the school's. Hopefully she will see that mandatory school functions are important." Among the scheduled activities which she ignored as irrelevant to her personal goals was the weekly (or biweekly) Activity Group Meeting. "I haven't been to a group meeting in a long time. There's no real discussion of projects, no open discussions. You just fill out schedules, etc. I haven't really done

the activity schedules in a long time. My parents don't want the copy. But if some emergency occurs, it's handy. But then again, you don't always follow them; things come up. But it is a good way of keeping up with the things you've done."

Tova's work during the first semester involved her in a project at the World Without War Council. This community resource was chosen for its relevance to her World Studies requirement, but it also gave her an opportunity to observe how a volunteer organization is run--something with which she would have to be familiar in her chosen profession of church-related counseling. Tova spent three or four hours at the WWW Council twice a week. Her schedule there included 45 minutes assisting the volunteers in their paperwork (which she called "monkeywork"), as she considered this to be an appropriate return for the time her RP's spent with her. Perhaps another 45 minutes would be spent with the chief staff member, observing her duties and learning about the functions of the organization. Yet most of Tova's time at World Without War was spent in their library, researching a report treating the effects of War on Hunger. Outside activities, such as viewing a series of TV programs on war were considered to be part of her research. In addition to a written essay on hunger, Tova's products for this project included a taped interview with her RP. Evaluating this experience, Tova said, "I found out how important this Council is to California, and I really learned the cold facts about hunger. I learned some skills that would be helpful in a secretarial job. I learned more about talking and interviewing, and more about the right questions and answers to give to people in this field." Tova's LC evaluated the taped interview she conducted in these words: "Her grasp of the workings of this volunteer organization is impressive." This was no doubt due to her RP's insistence that the tape include Tova's responses to questions posed by her RP, which concerned the operations of World Without War.

A site visit we conducted to the WWW Council while Tova was there revealed to us some of the problems that students encounter in working with RP's. We discovered that for the first few weeks of her presence there, Tova was thought, by most of the WWW staff, to be another volunteer. They had no idea she was there as a student. Her RP, moreover, was unaware that Tova's credit for her project would be in World Studies. "I was at WWW for two months before my RP knew what I was

doing." When she learned that the work Tova was doing would be applied to a World Studies credit, the RP expressed some doubt that it would cover all the topics generally included in that field.

Another kind of problem that Far West students sometimes face in dealing with RP's was illustrated by Tova's experience during an Orientation at the Oakland Museum, for which she ultimately received no credit. "It was an extremely long orientation--nearly a month." Her intention was to work in the Art Museum, and also to explore the job of Director, because that involves organizing projects with the community. Upon arrival at the Museum she found that the person with whom she would be working most closely was not the Director, but a lower-level staff member. This RP was very helpful. "She would explain at length about the paintings and give me other research to do. She didn't want me to do any work that wasn't related to my project." Because Tova came to the Museum near the end of the semester she decided not to complete a full project. There was insufficient time to do a good job, and in any case, she anticipated earning enough credits from her other work. However, the Museum Director (who was a member of the Far West Policy Advisory Board) had assumed that Tova was not simply completing a Career Orientation, but had committed herself to a full-blown project. He expected from her weekly schedules of activities, and descriptions of what she had learned. "He didn't understand that we had the option of doing it or not doing it. He was a good RP, but hard to work with, and not very understanding. He's got to learn that other people aren't going to work like he did." Tova was able to handle this problem in direct fashion, by confronting the Director and explaining to him her decision. "I don't let adults push me around anymore."

For the first semester, Tova received a total of 3.5 credits, consisting of .5 credits for her miniproject, Music, Algebra, Spanish, English, Physical Education, and her project at the World Without War Council. "I could have pushed it to get 4 units [by trying for a full credit for her WWW project], but I didn't need it anyway."

"Second semester was kind of a blow to me. First semester you work hard and get your projects done. You get called into the Director's office and you find out that you got 3.5 units at a B-plus average. Then you come back and you realize you have to do it all over

again." Tova felt that during her second semester she was a victim of "freedom shock". This is a term used at Far West to describe the behavior many students exhibit when accustomed restrictions are suddenly removed. "They expect students to do not so good the first semester, but what about the people who don't pick up second semester?"

Tova suggested that the school could schedule credit assignments on a more frequent basis, to help students keep up to date. "I spent two weeks of not doing anything. It's easy to get into the habit, and hard to get out of. Face it, self-motivation is a hard thing." She also recognized, though, the necessity for students to develop a sense of self-responsibility with regard to their school work. "People in their mid-20's are going to have this problem, too, when they make college plans, etc. Even though the students here can bullshit credits and do very little, you hear people saying, 'God, I've got to get to work', actually realizing that they need to work. In regular high school, you're attending, making a big effort just to be there."

Despite her initial lassitude, Tova managed to assemble 3.0 credits by the end of the second semester. One and a half credits were earned by continuing in activities commenced the previous Fall: her Algebra and Spanish tutorials, and Physical Education. (An English Tutorial was begun, but dropped shortly after the semester started.) The other credit and a half was earned through the completion of two projects.

Tova participated in the Anthropology Workshop and decided to do a project in this area that dealt with the problems of the elderly. Her mother, who was studying Sociology at a state college at the time, had become involved in several programs relating to social and legal difficulties of people in older age groups. She agreed to work with Tova as her RP, and helped her locate background materials, as well as plan activities.

This project led Tova into a variety of experiences. She used research materials to write essays on the Social Security Act and on the history of care for the elderly. She and her mother visited Board Care Homes, and she met and talked at length with many older people. This she found valuable in terms of her career interest in Counseling: "Just getting to know different categories

of people is useful to counseling." As a consequence of this project, Tova began to realize that the older members of her family were invaluable resources, and she started to collect family histories from them. Her documented work on this project earned her .5 credit.

Tova's second project focussed on Youth Forums, to give her a perspective on the common problems that Youth and Elderly both face. Her father and his church connections were resources. She helped him plan a local Youth Forum, and for the major part of her project she participated in a week-long conference on the problems of youth in modern society. "Last year I attended a meeting about youth and I wasn't heard. This year I talked a lot and stuck to my guns." She attributed this change in her ability to deal with groups of people to her experience at Far West. "I notice myself not being scared to really talk to people, and knowing what to say."

Tova plans to return to the Far West program next year, although she has some doubts about the way it will be run by the Oakland Public School System. She expects to use Far West as a home base, doing only one project per semester, and taking classes at a community college or adult evening school. She already has one project in mind, built around her interest in pastoral counseling. The classes she plans are Typing and Accounting, since she expects to work during her college training, and realizes that she needs salable skills. She also feels that she needs to re-accustom herself to the classroom environment; Tova's experience at Far West, although valuable in many other ways, has not made the classroom any more comfortable a place for her.

Helena - The Path of Least Resistance

Helena is an 18-year-old Black Senior who came to Far West from Oakland High School. A friend told her about the program, and she decided that she'd "check it out, and if I didn't like it, then I'd do my own thing." What immediately attracted her to Far West was its "totally different atmosphere: no halls full of lockers, no bells, not havin' all them rules, not havin' to go to the same old place everyday."

Helena entered Far West needing a total of 6 units in order to graduate. Although she had met the California State requirement of 8th grade competency in Math, she elected to participate in a Basic Math tutorial. Her attendance, however, was extremely poor because she could not get along with the tutor, and she received no credit.

Her miniproject took her to a "Soul" radio station, along with a large group of other Black students from Far West. Their RP was a disc jockey who had become a "culture hero" for the Oakland Black community, and they found contact with him to be extremely exciting. The other station personnel, too, were highly supportive, and permitted the Far West students access to the studio equipment, which they were taught to operate. Student projects at this site consisted of writing and recording commericals, and a talk show. Several members of the student group (not including Helena) began studying for their third class FCC licenses. Their RP's enthusiasm was so highly contagious that all of the students made the most of their opportunity to experience this highly enjoyable environment.

Unfortunately, Helena's positive relationship with this RP was not reflected in the quality of her original miniproject product. Her LC told her that it was "not as expected", but with more explicit instruction on how to document her work, Helena "sat right down and did it again." She received the standard .5 credit in Career Development for her miniproject after she submitted the revised product.

The only other credits Helena earned first semester were .5 units in Physical Education, and .5 units in English, based on the essays she wrote about her various career explorations. She had originally planned to complete 3.0 credits - half the total needed for graduation - but was unable to set up projects to earn the credits she had hoped for in Science and Business Communications. A major reason for Helena's minimal performance first semester may have been her overly specific notions of what she wanted to learn.

When she came to Far West, Helena had a very well-defined career interest. For some time she had known she would become some kind of secretary, and then became interested in Legal Stenography "by looking in a career book that I had. It pays well and it's more interesting that being a regular secretary." Her secondary interest was music, in which she had taken many courses.

Helena quickly discovered that the Far West resource pool did not include any legal stenographers or secretaries. The Resource Analyst responded to her request for additional resources by suggesting several possible sites, but none of these allowed more than a brief orientation. Helena went first to a local court to watch the stenographer at work, but this RP was too busy for an extended project with her. Next she went to a Congressman's office to work with his executive secretary, but "she was doin' things I wasn't interested in." Finally, she was tracked onto another legal secretary who worked for an attorney, but again, this RP had no time to enter into a prolonged training relationship. Helena then turned to her secondary interest of music, and tried to find an RP who sang, but "the only one available was a choir, and I didn't want to do that."

Helena made other attempts to explore careers and develop projects which were similarly abortive. With a friend from Far West she went to observe the work of a Reservations Clerk at a large hotel. "She sits down all day. I listened in on some calls, and didn't think I would be able to handle it." She tried to set up an association with a Black newswoman who runs a talk show at a local TV station, but this RP was extremely busy. "Okay, I could go and talk to her for 15 minutes during lunch, but that's all the time she had." Helena tried to get a project started at the Oakland Museum, only to find, once again, that her RP was too busy for her. She began another project at the Teacher's Union, where her former 6th grade teacher was employed. He had been one of her favorite teachers, but she said about the project with him, "it was boring. I guess it was his first year of teaching when he was fresh and new. After that it kind of wilts. Knowing what teachers are like, I couldn't get interested." Having experienced only what they felt as the repressive side of contemporary education, and believing that teachers in general lack real commitment to their students, Helena and many others at Far West can generate little sympathy for the professional problems of educators. She went to the Teacher's Union site only once.

This seeming inability to find a suitable RP may have been due to Helena's overly specific notions of the kind of a relationship she should have with an RP, and the value that relationship should have for her. Traditional education had exhausted her patience for irrelevant facts, information and skills. And, she had

rejected the holistic "Liberal Arts" concept that "everything is inherently interesting", and "it will all come together someday". Helena's perspective on career education involved doing, not watching, as well as a detailed introduction to the pragmatics of her chosen profession of Legal Stenography: its working conditions, its salary, and its potential benefits, all conveyed to her in specific, rather than abstract terms.

Helena had already made a firm career decision before entering Far West, and did not perceive its program as a way of determining the level of her interest. She had no notion of a career or vocation being a path through life, although she understood quite well that some kind of job was a financial necessity. If it could pay well, and be interesting, so much the better. Her plans for actually obtaining a job were similarly quite specific, but incomplete. "The Skills Center would place you. I don't know exactly what it is. My friend goes there. It's hard to get into and hard to get out of. They're very strict about attendance and lateness because they want to teach you the job requirements. They pay you to go there. It might be some kind of government thing."

Helena's LC, also a Black woman, understood her perspective on Far West, but insisted that she acquire some kind of skill in preparation for her career. She said, "You've got to get out and get training to get a job." For the second semester she guided Helena onto two external courses at an Oakland adult school, and kept in constant contact with the instructor to be sure that Helena's typing improved and that she learned Speedwriting. These two courses earned her one full unit of credit.

Helena also planned to participate in two workshop-format Tutorials, one on Business Math, and the other on Writing and Vocabulary Skills. Each of these would provide her with .5 units, so that with her external courses, plus another .5 for Physical Education, Helena could count on 2.5 units for the second semester. This left her two units short of the 4.5 needed to graduate on time, and although her LC advised Helena to consider summer school as a means of finishing some part of these, she planned to complete both by doing projects at Far West.

She participated in the Anthropology Workshop, and planned a project on friendship, emphasizing the variables

of age, sex, and race. The product was to include a photographic display of various social contexts, which would be accompanied by an essay. This was to earn her credit in Social Science, and in World Studies. She was also continuing with her work at the radio station, and had somewhat more vague plans to gain American Government credit by looking at the Federal regulations that govern media.

However, at this point, her LC left the program for several months because of a serious illness, and the staff member who acted as interim LC was not able to establish a working relationship with Helena. Late in April, the LC's replacement recorded, "Helena does not accept me as her LC and/or see the need to discuss her activities with me. She did not have sufficient guidance and progress monitoring when she finally met with me. Her plans and activities had changed yet she hadn't had alternatives to fall back on and did not seem aware of the seriousness of her position...She is in danger of not graduating in June. Her activities have not been focussed on meeting this need and she was unaware of how close she is to not graduating on time."

Helena's inability to relate to her LC was certainly a major cause for her increasing marginality to the formal program structure. She found it even more difficult than before to derive anything of value from her participation in Advisory Group meetings, even though she realized that "they keep you in touch with all the things going on at the school. But then again, there's all those forms." The paperwork part of being a Far West student never really had any meaning for Helena, and it did not serve its intended function of structuring her learning experiences. "I hate to fill out all these forms. That's one thing I don't like about this school." Browsing through her folder, Helena commented on all the forms she never bothered to complete: "Is all this stuff supposed to be filled out?...I don't know what this is." Her substitute LC was a member of the Far West Laboratory Development Staff, and more conversant with the EBCE theoretical model than with its modifications in actual practice. She attempted to lead Helena through the intricate maze of 'project goals', 'package objectives' and the compilation of a fully documented program, but succeeded only in alienating this student and further confusing her.

Other students might have responded to feelings of alienation by minimizing their presence at Far West, but Helena continued to attend for reasons that were non-

academic. She had become the leader of the social group at Far West that claimed the Ladies' Lounge as its turf, and by missing school she would also be missing the company of her best friends. Peer group activities had always been of the greatest importance to Helena. In describing her favorite leisure activities, she said, "I love to dance, sing and party, because you can really have fun and communicate through dancing and singing. I think everybody likes to party sometimes."

By the time her regular LC returned to Far West, Helena's long-ignored program was in a state of utter chaos. The LC said, "I had to give Helena deadlines, and projects, and step-by-step routines for getting everything done. I really pushed her. The Instructor for her external courses made her come twice as often so they could be signed off. I told her straight out that she wasn't going to be given any credit without doing any work, and that if she didn't shape up she just wasn't going to graduate." Helena still refused the suggestion that she finish up at summer school; her LC commented, "she believed that I could help her do it."

By dint of extreme effort, Helena was able to complete all her old projects - and one that was entirely new - in the final three weeks of the semester, and so barely managed to graduate with the rest of her class. In short, her pattern of activity for the second semester began with moderate enthusiasm for grandiose plans, then slumped to complete inanition, and ended with a mad frenzy. Far from being unique to Helena, this activity pattern was characteristic of many Far West students on the same path as she. Few, though, had quite so much work to complete, in so little time.

A project at Far West is ideally supposed to involve the working out of an individual interest that blends various academic fields with the utilization of community resources. The documents that are required of students are intended to shape and direct their efforts. Many students do manage to internalize the essentials of this process by the end of the year. As one student said, while helping another fill out his forms, "I want to get this stuff done so at least we have a clear idea of what's happening." For these students, the documentation process is a useful tool that gives initial direction, but that may not be employed throughout. To arrive at this point, however, involves a cognitive re-orientation; or, as one student put it, "Not much can be accomplished at Far West unless one relearns how to learn." It is clear that not all Far West students have been equally well prepared for the relearning that must occur. One LC

observed that "especially for Black students from Black neighborhoods, the schools they've gone to don't expect children to learn." A Black LC characterized these same schools as "holding pens", where little, if any, learning of an academic sort takes place.

Students like Helena, who come to Far West from "holding pen" schools, have some difficulty in mastering the delicate balance between structure and flexibility that the EBCE program demands. Their response to the documentation process is to take it much too seriously, or - what is more likely - not at all. However, this does not mean that their path through Far West involves no learning, merely that what was learned was not always reflected in the documentation. Helena, like Mateus, emerged from a year at Far West with a lessened hostility towards all institutional frameworks. She also felt much more confident in dealing with the world around her. "Oral communications, that's it right there. If you go to this school you're talking to people all the time - knowing how to act when you're around people. In regular school you don't talk to the teachers; they talk to you!"

Phillip - With the Best of Intentions

Traditional schools have always thought much better of Phillip than he has thought of them. While he was in the sixth grade he was placed in a program for gifted students which "kind of messed me up for a couple of years. They kept pushing me upward. I could do the stuff, but didn't know how I got there. It had no relevance." Other Far West students who had participated in programs for the "gifted" complained, with Phillip, that they tended to do more harm than good. They felt alienated from the rest of their classmates, deprived of many "normal" school experiences, and considered their "gifted" status to be an unearned evaluation.

Phillip's negative response to his Primary School program had caused him to feel increasingly detached from Math, English and other academic subjects. "I turned to Art as a kind of rebellion. By ninth grade all I liked was Art." He wanted to attend Skyline High School, which was reputed to have "a good Art program", but Phillip's residence was, unfortunately, outside that district. Upon appeal, though, he was given permission to attend Skyline, with the proviso that he take two years of Latin. Phillip found, to his chagrin, that the Art classes offered in high school were little better than

those he had taken in Junior High. "The classes never advanced. We did the same things year after year." Furthermore, "the environment was really bad. They locked the gates and you couldn't get out. Everybody else had the same kind of down feeling."

After Phillip saw a TV program about Far West, he tried to get hold of his Counselor to find out more about it. "He was always too busy. I must have tried to see him thirty times." He finally got an application for Far West by removing one from a poster that had been placed in his high school. Phillip hoped that his Junior and Senior years at Far West would give him a better perspective on learning, and would allow him to relate his Academic requirements to his long-standing interest in Art.

Orientation was, as usual, something of a come-down. "I can see that there's value to that, but the way they went about it was boring. It was easy for me to follow, but I could see that some students were bored. They told be how a project was done, but I didn't know what I was doing until the miniproject was done." Phillip's miniproject dealt with the role of Art in Advertising. His RP for the miniproject was an Advertising Executive for a large national corporation, who was reputed by the Far West students to be interesting, generous with his time, and easy to work with. Phillip's activities during the three weeks of the miniproject involved the completion of a Career Orientation Guide, and writing an essay on careers in advertising. He had originally hoped to spend some time working with the Graphic Arts Director of the advertising department where his RP was employed, since this was his major interest. He was, however, able to arrange only a preliminary meeting, and no project was forthcoming.

Phillip said of his miniproject, "I learned to express myself better orally as well as in writing from my experiences in the field of advertising, because I feel I have an understanding of advertising and feel confident about talking about it." His LC noted that "he appears to have learned a great deal through this project. He met his goals and, in fact, went well beyond them. His Career Orientation Guide and essay were thoughtful and reflected his interest in the project." A copy of Phillip's miniproject Plan has been reproduced as Figure 7.

The miniproject is quite clearly one of the most successful structures of the entire Far West program. It allows students to choose an interest for exploration, and guides them step-by-step through the various forms

fan west school	PROJECT GOALS, INDICATORS, AND EVALUATION (See INSTRUCTIONS on Reverse Side)	Page of

Student PHILLIP LC _____ Project Title Relations to art in advertising Date due 10/19/74 Date comp.

Goals and Indicators	For Indicators: Due Date	For Indicators: Evaluator	For Evaluator's Use: Date	For Evaluator's Use: Initials & Rating	For Evaluator's Use: Comments
Understand the relations to art in advertising 1) identify the relations to art in advertising in a career Orientation Guide. understand the relationships + importances of the different fields in advertising. 2) identify the relationships and importances + incorporate them in a 400 wd. essay with Goal #1a. (complete Career Orientation Guide.)	10/13 10/13	L.C. L.C.	10/24/74 10/24/74	@ @	Finding Purpose Summary Seek Purpose Report Good mastery of project plan process.

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Figure 7. Phillip's Miniproject Plan.

and documents which translate their experiences into credit. It is also the only project which has definite time period and deadline - it must be completed in three weeks - and some students find themselves working best under these conditions. It is not uncommon for students who have satisfying relationships with the RP's during their miniprojects to continue their associations through the semester in the form of a more detailed project for additional credit. Phillip, in particular, thought quite highly of his miniproject RP and expressed an interest in working with him further. "He's an outstanding RP. He has great interest in students and is good in passing on his interests. He's easy to work with and very knowledgeable." This RP himself noted that his attitude towards working with students had been skeptical at the first, but that now, "my most productive and rewarding hours of the week are the four that I spend with these students."

Phillip and four other Far West students completed a major investigation-level project with this RP in advertising. He met with them twice weekly for two hours, and worked with them in building an actual advertising campaign for a lunch spot near Far West School, where many students frequently hung out. He hoped to teach them the various skills and tasks involved in advertising, and to perform as a team, because this reflects actual working conditions. Each student was responsible for a different phase of the campaign, and they brought their individual work to the meetings with their RP for evaluation and integration. The final product was a full-scale marketing study that included mapping of the market, a study of the competition, an analysis of potential customers, copy writing, devising headlines, developing techniques for advertising through the mails, budgeting and sales promotion. Phillip's part focussed on the budget, and on doing design and illustration.

This project was extremely valuable for Phillip in terms of skill acquisition and career exploration, but his RP's second goal - teaching the students teamwork - was largely unfulfilled. Conflicts among the students arose, which were not evident at the twice-weekly meetings with their RP. Two or three members of the group felt that they had been "carrying" the others, and this problem came to a head when credit for the first semester was finally assigned. Phillip had asked for, and received, one full credit for his role in the Advertising project, but he was distressed to learn that "somebody who didn't even earn the 1.0 unit had gotten 1.5." He showed the project to the Operations Director, who had final word on credit assignment, and pointed out those parts which

represented his own work. After examining the material, the Director conceded that it would be reasonable to give Phillip .5 units in English, .5 units in Art, and .5 in Graphics for a total of 1.5. This was an unsatisfactory solution. Phillip was less concerned with increasing his own credit allotment than with the fairness of a system that gave credit to students who had not worked enough to deserve it.

The problem of credit assignment touches nearly every student at Far West; it is their single most common complaint about the program. Many speak contemptously of credit being "given" in return for little or no actual work, though few of those who speak in this way would refuse the gift. Edward, a highly vocal critic of Far West, had an experience in his Algebra tutorial that was similar to Phillip's. At the beginning of the semester it was agreed that the students were all to complete a certain number of modules in the course in order to receive their .5 units of credit. At the end of the semester, the only student actually to have completed the full number was Edward; the others had done about two-thirds as much, although the same amount of credit had been awarded to them all. When Edward met with the Operations Director for the final assessment of his credit, he complained that the other students had done much less work in Algebra than he. The response from the administration was to double Edward's credit allotment, rather than to reduce the credit assigned to the rest of the tutorial group. As Edward told us, "since I'm getting the credit, I'm not going to say anything, but at least I'm trying to become aware. Students aren't going to speak out against it."

The ideological stance of Far West is ambiguous on the problem of assigning credit and grades. It stands somewhere between the traditional school notion of grading for performance, which implies absolute criteria, and grading for individual progress, which implies relative criteria. The ambiguity is futher elaborated by the assumption that student claims for credit are made responsibly. If, as in the case of Mateus, the student manages to assemble all the necessary documentation for his work, staff skepticism as to the actual amount of work done is overridden by the belief that students should receive the benefit of the doubt. Though most staff members, especially LC's, are aware that some padding of credit takes place, they know, too, that students learn much that cannot be documented.

The Far West students are much less tolerant of this ambiguity than the staff. Their previous school experience has taught them to emphasize absolute standards of perfor-

nance, but at the same time they are normatively committed to a more flexible structure that permits elaboration of individual paths. They reject the authoritarianism they perceive in traditional schools, but they also dislike a system with constantly shifting standards. Edward speaks for many students when he says, "I don't feel that the intital contract has been carried out. It's like I'm cheating, only they're cheating. It has to be flexible, but there's no reason to be that flexible."

This attitude was expressed primarily by middle-class students who, underneath a superficial veneer of cynicism, retained much of their idealism about the value of school. They believed that getting credit "the easy way" was a kind of cheating, and that in the end, they themselves were the ones being cheated. As Phillip told us, "If I just did work to get out of school quickly, I'd feel that I didn't really learn what I needed."

Many lower-class students, on the other hand, had no such compunctions. Their school career was largely irrelevant to their lives, except insofar as it qualified them for jobs. The important thing was to finish with a minimum of hassle, and if "doing their own thing" could be translated into credit towards graduation, so much the better.

Edward and Phillip were atypical in their response to the problem of credit in that they were not content privately to complain about apparent unfairness, but took their objections directly to the staff. In Phillip's case this action served to increase the level of his personal conflicts. The student whom he had accused of doing less work than claimed was extremely upset, although his own credit was in no way affected, and threatened to resign from the Advertising Project group. Following a confrontation during their meeting with the RP, Phillip himself left the group, which continued its work through the second semester.

In this way Phillip was deprived of the only successful relationship with an RP he was to establish all year. This represented a double loss, since the Advertising project had been in a career field that interested him and which he intended to pursue. For a project in Graphic Arts he set up a series of appointments with an RP at a printing shop, who canceled out at the last minute. "That just blew my project," Phillip said, and he was unable to recruit any other RP's in Graphics. Whereas many students claim to be incapable of finding suitable RP's in order to evade project responsibilities, Phillip made numerous honest efforts to contact resources, with-

out any success. His LC did not fault him for his failure to find RP's, believing that his efforts to do so were made with the best of intentions. "He has a lot of integrity," the LC said. "He is a serious person who keeps his word better than any other student."

Phillip's involvement with the Advertising project earned him two full credits for the first semester: .5 for the miniproject (which counts as Career Education), and 1.5 for the group project. He also earned .5 credits for Physical Education by skating, hiking, walking and ice hockey. "I do those things every day," he said, "might as well get some credit for them." This brought his credit total for the first semester to a standard 2.5.

Unlike most Far West students, Phillip received no credit first semester for tutorials, workshops or external courses, preferring the project format to any of these. During the second semester, though, Phillip found no RP's available to him, and so he turned to these more highly structured means of obtaining credit. He arranged for an External Course in Painting and Drawing at Studio Two (a project of the Oakland Department of Parks and Recreation), which met for three hours once a week. Although most of the other students taking this course were preschool, or else elderly, Phillip said that it was a valuable experience. He received .5 credits.

In addition, Phillip opted to participate in a "Cooperative Group Interaction Skills" workshop that was being field-tested by members of the Far West Laboratory. All the members of the Advertising project were included in this workshop, because its leaders wanted to have among the members a group with some previous experience in trying to work together. In describing the goals of the workshop, its designer said that the "students will develop skills in group communication; knowing and using group resources; planning, controlling and evaluating group performance; resolving conflicts; and cooperative group efforts...Students will participate in group problem-solving role plays, simulations, exercises and discussions. The skills will be taught in the context of planning and conducting an advertising campaign." Phillip's response to this workshop was overwhelmingly favorable. He enjoyed the exercises, and felt that he was really learning something. This was a notable achievement, since he was dealing with the same group that had become so divisive during first semester, and from which he had resigned. His participation earned him .5 credits in Related Social Sciences.

Phillip's major work in the second semester was developing and implementing a project entitled, "U.S. History as Reflected by American Painters." He had planned the goals and objectives early in first semester, but was unable to find any RP's to aid him. Both his LC and the Resource Analyst had suggested various possibilities, and Phillip followed up on each of them with no success. Since he seemed so interested in this project, his LC agreed to allow him to do library research. The content of his product would be evaluated by the LC, and the writing skills demonstrated in his essay would be evaluated by the Skills Specialist.

This project was impressive in several respects. Phillip had taken a course in American History at his High School which "turned me off completely. U.S. History was something I didn't want to know." Nevertheless, he had to meet an Oakland Public School requirement in American History, so he decided to blend this with in interest in Art, "to get a better understanding of history, and how art reflected it." Some students might have transformed this into a completely trivial assignment, but Phillip, with characteristic energy, sought out over a dozen source books in four different libraries, and documented a total of 163 hours of work--13 more hours than was needed to earn .5 units in U.S. History, and another .5 units in English. "This is what I wanted to learn and I'm learning it. So if it takes more time, it's OK." The final product was a 62 page essay which would have been more than acceptable at a junior college level.

Towards the end of the second semester, Phillip participated in the student-organized Social Science workshop, and collaborated with Mateus and two other students in making an animation that had Far West School as its subject. This represented a heavy investment of time. "I spent at least 23 hours filming, plus 20 hours developing the idea, and more hours editing it and putting on the sound." At first this project was done without any intention of getting credit for it, but once the group realized just how much of their time would be taken up, they decided to apply their work towards semester requirements. However, Phillip was then criticized by a student outside the group for being a "credit monger". "When I got to be hassled about doing it just for credit I said, "OK, I won't take the credit. To me the unit of credit wasn't important, but the idea was. The only way I could show some people my idea was to do it for no credit. If I was only interested in credit I would be doing projects I didn't care for so much, just to get through."

Phillip's attitude towards education changed drastically over the year he spent at Far West. He became much more critical of the program structure--as did many students--but he remained committed to the program's goals. "My number one reason for coming to Far West was to get out of regular school, but when I found out more about the program and their ideas, I was inspired to work with it." Far West's main value to Phillip was in terms of "working with people getting people to know what I think, what I want to do. This would never happen in regular school. It has helped me to express myself better. I didn't used to talk about things that seemed minor to me; now I can feel real in all kinds of conversations."

CHAPTER 5

CONCLUSION

This report is directed primarily towards those who are considering replicating the Far West EBCE program in their own school systems, or who have already done so and are now faced with the difficulties of its everyday operation. We have been concerned with the degree of fit between the description of the program provided by its developers, and its actual operations as we observed it over most of school year. Our perspective has consistently been that of the students at EBCE. We have, however, not been concerned with the "average" or "typical" student but with an idiosyncratic, unique aggregate of specific individuals, and we hope that in our effort to generalize we have not been guilty of violence to the diverse reality we observed.

Throughout the course of our investigation we found ourselves asking a single evaluative question that, at successive points in time, we would phrase in different ways: "What do students at Far West actually do, and how does this differ from the activities the program specifies for them?"; "What are the various 'paths' students may take through the EBCE program structure, and what determines the level of student satisfaction with the 'path' that has been chosen?"; "What factors lead a student to take maximal (or minimal) advantage of the opportunities provided by EBCE?"

The answers to these questions have been incorporated into a systematic description and analysis; they appear in the body of our report, and it is not our intention to repeat them all in this section. We see two purposes to this Conclusion. First, we would like to note some of the problems which must be solved in any EBCE replication program. Although we understand that some of our recommendations will be impossible because of financial or policy problems of local school boards, we make them in an attempt to suggest the optimum conditions for creating a program which presents, from the student perspective, a real alternative to traditional education. We will also address the question of what the EBCE program structure actually enables students to learn, however they operationalize it in their individual "paths". Evaluation of learning is a difficult question; our conclusions are based on the students' own perceptions of changes in themselves, on staff evaluations, and on our own observations and judgments about the often intangible qualities of growth.

Students' Initial Attitudes and Perspectives

Virtually all of the students accepted into the EBCE program shared a feeling of alienation from the traditional school environment. They rejected its academic content, which they saw as irrelevant to their needs and interests; they perceived its teachers as rigid authoritarians; they rebelled against the monotony of having to return, every day, to "the same four walls." Any replication program which finds similarly negative attitudes among the students it accepts should realize how this will affect the program's initial operation. Such a replication program cannot assume a high level of student enthusiasm for any structured activity, and must deal with the problem of generating motivation. Thus, in actual practice, the Operations Staff (or some appropriate staff) must not only guide students in developing and following their interests, it must also overcome habits of rejection and rehabilitate them to some minimal acceptance of the institutional framework. Rehabilitation is one of the largest problems faced by an EBCE program, but it is, at the same time, one of the greatest benefits it can provide to the community.

Some kinds of students are much more easily integrated into the program than others, and perhaps there is an inevitable minority who do not benefit from it at all. The Far West staff was well aware of EBCE's differential success with its students. One LC made the following analysis:

> Far West School can work for a student turned off to traditional school who hasn't given up on the system; for a student who would like to be in a smaller setting, where he can get to know people and get more attention; for students with definite goals, and those who haven't made up their minds; for students who haven't been able to grasp the bullshit given out in school; for the student withdrawn and quiet in school, but capable of performing, though without the confidence that he could do anything.
>
> Far West doesn't work for a student who's been a goof-off all his life with no perception of anything but having a good time. It's not for the student who has to be told everything about what to do. Nor is it for the student who has been hostile to school from the standpoint of "everybody's wrong". And it's not for students who can't accept responsibility, or for those who want to manipulate any and everybody.

We see no simple way to make an initial selection of only those students who will do well in the program. Previous school performance (of the students we knew) was not an adequate predictor of a student's response to EBCE. In any case, students who see EBCE as a way to avoid academic or other work would probably have made no greater progress in the traditional school environment, and perhaps they would have dropped out of it entirely. However, such students have a disruptive effect on the learning atmosphere that EBCE attempts to sustain.

Setting

The student's interest in school is profoundly affected by the informal social patterns that evolve as the program year progresses. Student group processes also influence individuals' conceptions of the program, their information about community resources, their perceptions of academic possibilities and their strategies for solving (or avoiding) problems. The location of the Resource Center is of significance in this regard, because it structures the relations among and within student groups. Placing the Center in a neutral zone, such as the El Dorado Office Building, makes attendance a novel experience for all the students, who enter on an equal footing. Were the Center to be located within a high school, this advantage would be lost. The patterns that would emerge are not wholly predictable, but is reasonable to assume that students coming in from other high schools might consider themselves "trespassers" on another group's "turf", and form tight groups as a defensive measure. Depending upon the distribution of racial and class groups among the home high schools social interaction might become hostile, and inter-group conflict is a possibility. Those students who remain in their own high school, but associate with the EBCE Center, might be tempted not to detach themselves from other social groups or extra-curricular activities, which could lead to insufficient involvement in the program. For some potential drop-outs, EBCE is a "fresh start" that has little real chance of success unless they are completely removed from the social environment associated with their failure-prone academic habits.

It is also important that the neutral zone selected to be the EBCE Center have a location that is "central", and not "peripheral" to the hub of the community. This will ensure that students elaborate their old paths through the community, and that they will have adequate access to public transportation facilities. Most neighborhood high schools are not in economic centers, and

are thus not near major transport routes; those high schools that have inner-city locations may have racial or class compositions that would create problems in terms of informal social organization similar to those caused by busing. Our recommendations concerning the site of the EBCE Center coincide with those of Far West students.

Although the Far West School setting provided most of the optimal conditions mentioned above, students complained about the dreary atmosphere of the office building and the lack of quiet conditions in which to work. This problem might be solved by acting on their own suggestions that they be given a small budget, and the freedom, to redecorate at least part of the premises. This might have the additional positive effect of committing them to the school as their own place.

Intended and Structured Program Activities

The Orientation period is obviously important to the functioning of the program. It provides indoctrination into program goals and procedures, and it is also the time of the students' first impressions about EBCE. Unfortunately, we were brought into the external evaluation too late to observe this part of the program, and our conclusions are based upon students' responses to questions in both structured and informal interviews. Uniformly they recalled the Orientation period as boring. "I had to sit through three weeks of the same old stuff." "They tell you what you're supposed to do, but I didn't know what a project was until second semester." Students at this time are eager to be doing things, not sitting in classrooms, and it seemed clear that information received without the opportunity to put it into immediate use was rejected out of hand or was confusing.

The Miniproject was the most successful phase of Orientation, and was regarded favorably by most students. They generally received the greatest amount of structured advice from their LC's in planning and documenting this first project. There was a limited time period for the completion of the work, so the level of student involvement remained high. All students were included in the same cycle of activity, although at different Resource sites, and with individual interests guiding their projects. For their first venture into the community, they were often introduced to the sites they chose on group tours, which students tended to enjoy.

Although the rationale for an extended orientation period is clear, it seems likely that most adolescents will share the Far West students' impatience with lengthy definitions of program structures and explanations of numerous forms. Any change of institutional procedures requires a period of adjustment, but it seems unrealistic to expect this to be shortened by explanation in the absence of experience. Early student involvement with the miniproject might be the best solution.

Both Advisory Group and Package Meetings had ceased to be vital and useful structures before the end of the school year. Advisory Group Meetings deteriorated into form-filling sessions, and Package Meetings ceased entirely, for reasons which have been discussed in Chapter 3. This perhaps need not occur in replication situations. Both these groups were designed to fulfill real functions; the structural flaw which may have undermined them from the beginning of the year, was requiring them to be conducted by LC's, much of whose time was taken up with the demands of individual student counseling. The sense of unity which we perceive as so vital to the functioning of these groups may never have evolved. LC awareness of this problem may serve to reduce its magnitude in replication situations. In addition, the Far West students and staff suggested that the group activities might be improved by certain structural changes.

Since attendance at Advisory Group meetings is required of students, it seems reasonable to allocate credit for participation. Students might be made responsible for leading all or part of a session, during which time they could show films, bring in guest speakers, or give presentations of their project products. Many students noted that the only "live" structures at Far West were those which directly aided them in obtaining credit, and those which presented the greatest variety of novel experiences. These changes might increase student interest in attending the Advisory Group meetings, and they would also sensitize students to the problems their LC faces.

Similar changes might be made in Package Meetings. Introducing RP's as guest lecturers would make the meetings more interesting and it would also create an avenue of feedback to RP's about the EBCE program and its students. The Packages are derived from a highly sophisticated conceptual approach, and the students clearly need some form of guidance to utilize them effectively. The students at Far West had expected the Package Meetings to have some kind of teaching function,

and replicators might consider using the meetings as an opportunity to clarify some of the questions which define the career or interest area the Package is designed to explore. A final suggestion is that the Learning Packages might be made more valuable if the sample project plans they contain represent actual student work--with all its flaws--rather than some unrealizable ideal model.

The project as the heart of an educational program, as opposed to the classroom and the "course", is an extremely innovative idea with considerable potential for future elaboration. We have illustrated how students consistently deviated from the ideal project process; this must be expected when students move from a passive learning format to one where they are acquiring the ability to form and answer their own questions. The success of the project format should be judged not in terms of the number of "ideal" products submitted, but on the basis of the students' increased competence in devising and implementing projects as the year progresses. The projects of students in their second year at Far West did, in fact, approach the ideal both in process and in product.

We would like to emphasize the need for continually re-educating the students as to the form and the purpose of the project. Students' initial introduction to this information comes during the hectic Orientation period, and by second semester much has been altered or forgotten. Especially during the second semester, students may require much more guidance in how to organize the time they spend working on their projects. As a basis for documentation, the Project Plan seemed to be a useful tool whether it was created prior to the project's commencement, or after its completion. The Project Plan should not be seen as a rigid contract, to which the student is bound to comply, but some initial statement of goals and intentions should be required of them. (In fact, this is the way FWL/EBCE developers have conceptualized the use of the Project Plan.)

The substitution of the Project for credit in one or more academic courses may be of concern to replicators, as it was to both parents and RP's. Does a project on "The Effect of War on World Hunger", for example, really substitute for a course in World Studies? The answer to this question is both yes and no. Clearly, a course on World Studies covers many topics which a project on hunger will never touch. On the other hand, when information derives from personal experience, much is likely to be retained; when it comes straight from a textbook,

it is likely to be forgotten immediately following the final exam. An academic course of study should require a student to write effectively and knowledgably about what he has learned (so we believe). Thus, the ideal project which involves Far West students in discussions with peers, staff members and other adults, will likely go far beyond studying a set of facts and seek for demonstration of a real sense of competence and understanding. We frequently found that students had acquired an impressive grasp of subjects in which they were interested, primarily as a result of projects they had completed. As a final contrast to academic courses of traditional high schools, we might note that academic courses are remembered for their titles, not their contents, whereas projects are remembered in terms of the actual work that was done, and the product that resulted from it.

Staffing

With all due respect to the intended structure of Far West, the tone of the program was set by the people who made up its Operations Staff. In setting up a replication program we recommend that great care be taken in selecting and training staff members, particularly the LC's and the Operations Director. We believe the diversity of the staff should correspond to that of the student population in terms of class, sex, and racial background. The student-LC relationship is highly personal, and it is important for both to feel comfortable with each other. This does not mean that a precise matching of students and LC's is possible, or even advisable; there should, however, be a range of choices available.

The staff should have some basic commitment to the notion of alternative education. If the students at any replication site are at all like those we encountered at Far West, they will demand of their LC's a delicate and ever-changing balance between authority and flexibility. Students tended to disrespect LC's who made no demands upon them, as well as those whose manner was perceived as excessively authoritarian.

The LC is the member of the Operations Staff most conversant with the students' projects, and should, at least in theory, be in touch with the actual work done in the community. As we discovered when we served as RP's at Far West, the channel of communication to the resource sites is that least likely to be well-developed by the LC's. Although they should make regular site visits, in practice their contact with RP's tended to be

limited to crisis situations. As provided by the program designers, communications in a replication site might be better if the entire Operations Staff--including the LC's--was involved in the initial process of site development. This would also provide the LC's with better information on the entire range of available RP's.

The interaction style of the Operations Director in large part determines the extent to which the program is personalized or depersonalized, for both students and LC's. The Operations Director deals directly with students at least in the final assessment of their credit earnings, and it is essential that he have some prior familiarity with them and their work. He must also maintain the balance between structure and flexibility in all phases of his decision-making; he must be a legitimate source of appeal for students when they have disagreements with their LC's, but he must avoid undermining the authority of his staff.

We have previously alluded to the complexities of the Skills Specialist's job, which requires both administrative and teaching competencies. This position should either be made wholly administrative and the tutorial staff expanded, or else the Skills Specialist should concentrate upon teaching and evaluation, and an administrative assistant be acquired to assume the time-consuming chores of scheduling and tutor recruitment.

Resource Persons

In Chapter 3 we noted that many students frequently develop projects by first identifying RP's and potential activities at sites, and then formulating some kind of project around their choice. Thus, the available pool of community resources will structure what the students can learn. As Phillip's case demonstrated, it is extremely difficult to do a project for which no RP's are available.

The composition of the available resource pool was, at Far West, affected by the prevailing ideological climate. There was a definite bias in favor of white-collar occupations such as professionals, office workers and the arts. The recruitment of resources was also limited by the economy of the surrounding community, and by the willingness of persons and organizations to participate in the program. Similar, though not identical forces will be at work in any replication site.

Students suffered from the restricted communication between RP's and the program staff. A problem they consistently encountered, especially in larger organizations, was that the persons with whom they worked most closely were not well informed about the EBCE program or the project the student was doing. It seems clear that the program should concentrate on a continual educational effort in regard to RP's. Both students and RP's should be made to understand their mutual responsibilities to keep appointments and to see their relationships through to the project's conclusion.

In spite of limitations in, and difficulties with its resource pool, the Far West program does help students develop the ability to access themselves onto community resources. Their range of information about their community increases, and they are made aware of its vast potential for learning. This was best demonstrated by the students who recruited interesting new individuals or groups for the resource pool, as well as for their individual projects.

Career Maturity

Students entered Far West with many different future plans and career perspectives. Some, such as Helena, who intended to become a legal stenographer, had specific jobs in mind. Others had preferred interests or fields which they planned to explore, such as art, videotape and media, or computers. There were those who planned to go to college, and there were also those who had no plans at all. It is therefore difficult to generalize about the increase in students' career maturity when they began from so many diverse points.

Students reported two kinds of changes in their career plans. In the course of projects, certain students developed interests which led them to definite career paths. Students with active, but non-specific interests were introduced to actual job possibilities and conditions, and so fleshed out their previous notions about careers. In both cases, students became much more pragmatic about jobs. As a result of their program experience they learned about the kinds of places where they might be employed, their actual potential for employment, and the kind of further training and experience they would have to acquire before they were truly employable. As further evidence of their increasing pragmatism, some students who were enthusiastic about their Career Explorations did not intend to pursue jobs in these areas, because of insufficient job security. Such students often planned careers in the Armed Services.

Not all students made such strides in career maturity. The sophomores and juniors in the program tended to be most interested in the experiential learning offered by Far West, and for most, thoughts about specific careers were quite distant. Of the graduating seniors, few, in fact, had immediate job prospects, or even career plans. Many intended to go to college, recognizing that almost any job that interested them would require further education, and shrewdly realizing that "in times of depression, college is a good place to be."

Career development in the sense of informed job selection is not the major concern of the Far West EBCE program, although students are encouraged to develop long-term plans and make several Career Explorations. Rather, the focus of the program is on increasing the students' awareness of decisions which must be made in the course of every life, and the consequences which flow from these decisions.

What is perhaps even more important is the change in the students' definition of "career". Previously they thought in terms of "jobs"--sets of tasks which are performed only for the sake of remuneration. As a consequence of their year at Far West, they realized that almost any job contains some possibility for movement. They understood the function of entry-level positions in the corporate structure, the value of personal contacts for job advancement, and the ways in which one's employment affects the other phases of life.

Furthermore, students learned to adopt a pragmatic attitude towards dealing with bureaucracies. They became acutely aware of the difference between theoretical structures and actual operating procedures; in this respect their dealing with the Far West bureaucracy represented valuable training.

The Intangibles of Growth

The Far West School is more than just a center of learning. It is also a social process that inevitably brings about some measure of personal growth. Although this may elude documentation, and may not evidence itself on standardized tests, our long observations of students indicated to us just how far they had traveled on the road towards becoming adults.

The lack of self-definition is a major problem of adolescence. It is not enough, today, to be somebody's child, a resident of a given district, a student at a

certain school, a set of test scores. Students resisted any kind of categorization of this sort, denying the validity of personal evaluations such as "smart", "dumb", or even "motivated". Though all adhered to the "rad-lib" philosophy of "doing your own thing", few were sure of what their "own thing" really was.

Previous to their Far West experience, the students could only create for themselves self-definitions by default: they were NOT fascists, good little students, capitalists, conservatives, or in any way like the adults they knew. Whatever other benefits Far West had for them, it helped students to crystallize their interests, and thus gave them a sense of who they were or might become.

At the same time, many of their negative categorical attitudes, particularly towards institutions, diminished in intensity. With the support of Far West, they had entree into organizations which they had previously regarded only as agents of oppression. As their sense of power and competence increased, they began to see large institutions as systems that often manipulate people, but which themselves can be manipulated. As soon as they were regarded "as people and not numbers", they began to respect the individuality of others, whatever their bureaucratic roles.

Although they would certainly deny the appellation, the students at Far West were modern-day romantics and idealists. They truly believed in the power of the individual to shape his own life. Much of their cynicism and criticism of the world around them arose from their notion of what should be, as opposed to what really is. Because the Far West staff was so open to making program changes on the basis of student feedback, the students perceived, perhaps for the first time, that non-dogmatic, specific recommendations for change may find a responsive audience.